Sri Chakra



S. Shankaranarayanan



THE AUTHOR

Though his academic attainments are in Mathematics and his professional interests lie in a specialised field of industrial management, Sri S. Shankaranarayanan has retained his first love for Sanskrit. In his childhood he was introduced to the ancient Sanskrit lore by his grandfather, Sri S. Narayana Iyer, who was himself a deep initiate in *Sri Vidyā*. Later he came under the dynamic influence of Sri Kapali Sastriar. Shankaranarayanan cherishes a special regard for this tradition of the worship of the Divine Mother and his treatises on *Devī Māhātmyam*—both in Tamil and English—and The Ten Great Cosmic Powers (*Daśa Mahāvidyās*) have acquired an authenticity of their own. The present work on *Sri Cakra*, revealing as it does the depth of his scholarship, practical insight and occult knowledge, promises to be a classic on the subject. Endowed with luminous intellect, well-versed in the modes of esoteric worship and awake with an active spiritual aspiration, Shankaranarayanan is marked out to play a singular role in the resuscitation of the spiritual and occult tradition of India in terms of modern thought and understanding.

—M. P. PANDIT

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SRI CHAKRA



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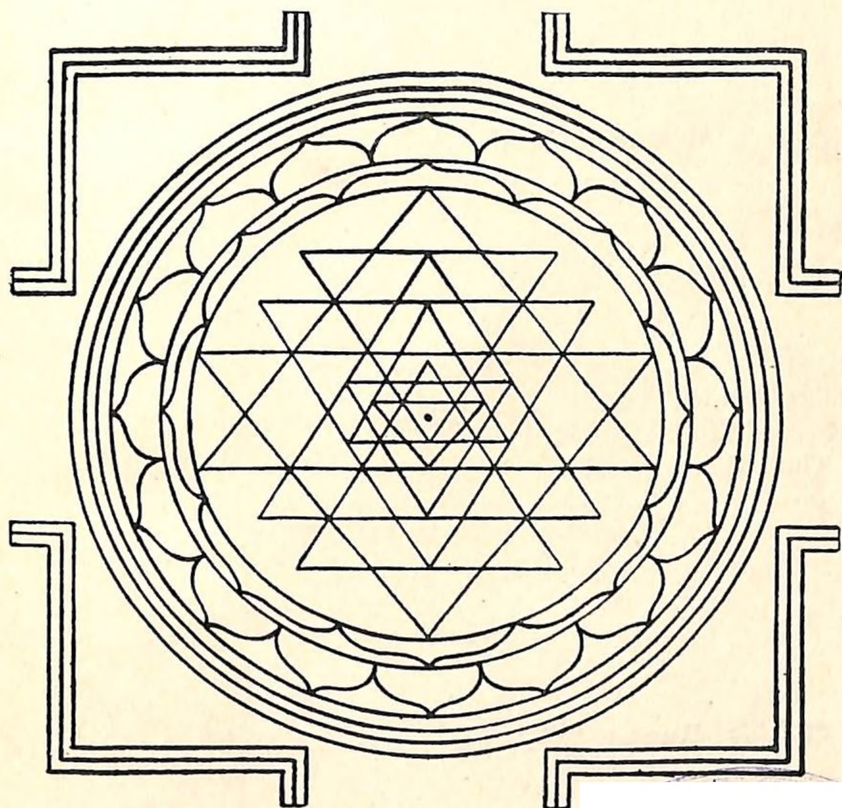


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TO

SRI KAPALI SASTRIAR

तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति

By his Light all this luminous grows

CONTENTS



SYMBOL OF THE INFINITE

All that escaped conception's narrow noose
Vision descried and gripped; their seeing thoughts
Filled in the blanks left by the seeking sense.
High architects of possibility
And engineers of the impossible,
Mathematicians of the infinitudes
And theoricians of unknowable truths,
They formulate enigma's postulates
And join the unknown to the apparent worlds.
Acolytes they wait upon the timeless Power,
The cycle of her works investigate;
Passing her fence of wordless privacy
Their mind could penetrate her occult mind
And draw the diagram of her secret thoughts;
They read the codes and ciphers she had sealed,
Copies they made of all her guarded plans,
For every turn of her mysterious course
Assigned a reason and unchanging rule.
The Unseen grew visible to student eyes,
Explained was the immense Inconscient's scheme,
Audacious lines were traced upon the Void;
The Infinite was reduced to square and cube.
Arranging symbol and significance.
Tracing the curve of a transcendent Power,
They framed the cabbala of the cosmic Law,
The balancing line discovered of Life's technique
And structured her magic and her mystery.

—Sri Aurobindo: *sāvitri* (II.11).



I. THE WAY OF THE TANTRA

The One Existent, the illumined seers speak of variously[1] —Rig Veda

He is the soul; the other gods are his limbs[2] —Taittiriya Upanishad

God garbed in the body is the self;
disrobed he is the God Supreme.[3] —Kalpasutra

The mystics of ancient India perceived as a fact of spiritual experience the sublime Reality behind all appearances, the unique Consciousness immanent in things and the One Supreme Deity above the manifold creation. At the same time, they realised that the Powers and Personalities of the One Godhead are different and distinct in their functions and workings and the *Many* are no less a fact than the One. For instance, the Vedic seers held that the One, the Creative Godhead manifested the universe of the Many, out of his own being, giving birth in the process to various gods and goddesses. "Even as every link has its place in a chain and every limb in a body, even so every one of the Cosmic Gods who has his part in the sacrificial sessions has his sanctified place in the scheme. Every portion of the Godhead, offered as sacrifice for the cosmic creation is entitled to receive its share in the inner sacrifice offered by man and it is indispensable that the entire body of the creative Purusha must be satisfied for the

[1] एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति। —(I.164.46)

[2] स आत्मा, अङ्गान्यन्या देवताः। —(1.5)

[3] शरीरकञ्चुकितः शिवो जीवः निष्कञ्चुकः परशिवः। —(1.5)

perfect fruition of the great work,"[1] Each God has a special and distinct function to perform in the universe, has a distinct field of activity and presides over a particular realm in the cosmic kingdom.

The way of the Tantra is likewise comprehensive. It teaches that in this creation, apart from this world in which we live, there exist other worlds and universes in serried sequence spreading over a rising tier of Consciousness and planes. There is one Supreme Deity presiding over every thing. He does so with a gradation of his powers, personalities and emanations, *vibhūtis*, with a hierarchy of gods and goddesses who perform the functions delegated to them, deriving their authority from the Supreme God-head. These are posited in the various planes on the rising tier of Consciousness. These are distinct and can be distinguished by their particular forms, ornaments, weapons and retinue. The numerous *devatās* help man in his spiritual progress, aid him in his uphill task of reaching the summit, the Supreme Deity.

The Vedic Rishis invoked the gods posited on various planes with the *vāk*, the living word of *Truth* surcharged with the consciousness proceeding from the depths or from the heights of their being and it was invariably their experience that the gods responded to their word of call. According to them, all the gods reside in the Supernal Ether, *paramam vyoma*, which is the abiding place of all the Riks. "This Ether of the Sub-

[1] Collected works of T. V. Kapali Sastry Volume One: *The Book of Lights-I*

lime above is the native home of the primordial sound-substance of which the Mantras are formations hidden in the higher planes and manifest in their descent to the last step which is the human speech. This supernal *ākāśa* is the imperishable source and perpetual basis of sonorous rhythms that issue from the heights to form the planes and build the worlds and also to function by casting harmonic spells for their sustenance."[1] When the Rishi makes an invocation by a Rik, he contacts, with the power of consciousness packed in the Rik, the supernal Ether and in the Ether, the particular god who vibrates in resonance to the particular frequency of the sound symbol. The *vāk* itself is the vehicle on which the gods come in response to the prayer of the Rishi.

Adopting this Vedic theory of Vak into its system, the Tantra has developed this line with an eye on practical utility so much that the Tantra is popularly known as *mantra śāstra* and acclaimed as a great *sādhana śāstra*, practical science. For, while affirming the existence of the Transcendental Absolute Brahman, the Tantra affirms also the existence of the universe as the manifestation of the Divine. The Tantric has no objection to call the world as *māyā* as long as it is clearly understood that the *māyā* is the Divine Mother herself. The Sadhana of the Mantra is advocated for material things as well, as these are the foundations on which the whole spiritual structure stands. As the

[1] Collected works of T. V. Kapali Sastry Volume One: *The Book of Lights I:* The Vak of the Veda and the Throb of the Tantra.

Upanishad says "the earth is his lower member whereon he rests abidingly"[1] and one has to start at the base to reach the summit. The creative word, Vāk of the Veda becomes the *nāda*, the *ādya spanda*, the primal throb which develops in the course of its manifestation into the seed-sounds *bījākṣaras*. These find a place in the formulation of Mantras which emerge from the direct revelation and inspiration of the Tantric seers. "Actuated by a synthetic spirit to include every element of truth that matters and concerns the individual and the universal, *piṇḍāṇḍa* and *brahmāṇḍa*, to use their terminology, they proceed from the subtle meaningful sound-vibrations to their causal and to the great Causal of all causals which issue from the Original Throb which in its native form is Light."[2]

The Seer with the faculty of inspirational audience hears the *mantra* as a particular vibration of the Original Throb, representing the *sound-body* of the particular godhead in the pyramidal structure of Consciousness. He also with the faculty of the revelatory vision sees the *yantra* as a particular emergence of the Original Light, representing the *form-pattern* of the same godhead. The Mantra is the sound-body of the deity, while the Yantra is its form-pattern. The Nameless and the Formless has become this world of names and forms. The Tantra teaches that through the name and the form one should sense the nameless and the form-

[1] पृथिवी पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । —*Taittiriya Upanishad* (2.2.)

[2] Sri Kapali Sastriar: The Vak of the Veda and the Throb of the Tantra. (Collected works: Volume One)

less. *mantra*, the name and *yantra*, the form, are the keys of *tantra*, the act, the practice of the precept that the devotee with his name and form is one in identity with the deity that is nameless and formless.

II. THE CONCEPT OF THE CHAKRA

"*Thence I extend pervading all the worlds; and yonder Heaven I closely touch and penetrate with the showering and flowing body of mine*"[1] —Rig Veda.

"*The rays emanating from the Self-born;*
they fashioned the bodies."[2] —Arunopanishad.

"*They say that the primordial of the Lights is that of* Savitṛ, *the Creator, high above the universes; the ultimate of the Lights is in man, sought inside by the wise.*"[3] —Sri Kapali Sastriar.

The Vedic seers speak of the Supernal Ether, *paramam vyoma*, as the abode of *vāk*, as the house of the supreme immortal Light; and the Tantric adepts speak of the *mahākāraṇa*, the great causal, as the store-house of all *śabdas*, as the permanent place of *prakāśa*, light. From this mass of infinite supernal light which has no form, emerge during the course of manifestation the rays which fashion the objects of the world as well as the gods in the cosmos, the *devas*, powers of light (from *div* to shine). In manifestation, the limitless One has to limit himself in a form. The formless Great Radiance has to radiate rays of definite forms and marshal them as the various gods thus creating out of the One, the Many with distinct and distinguishable forms and features. These lines of light build the

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[1] ततो वि तिष्ठे भुवनानु विश्वोतामूं द्यां वर्ष्मणोप स्पृशामि ।
— (X. 125.7)

[2] मरीचयः स्वायम्भुवाः ये शरीराण्यकल्पयन् —(9.10)

[3] ज्योतिषामादिमं प्राहुः सावित्रं विश्वतः परम् ।
अन्तिमं मानुषे तेषामन्तरे मृग्यते बुधैः ।। —(*āhnika stava*)

form-patterns of the gods, which are known as Yantras or Chakras. The Tantrics hold that by worshipping the Chakra of a deity, one senses immediately its form-pattern and so has a concrete realisation of the deity. By contemplating on a mass of indefinite light one can get only an intangible something but if one has to see the form of the Formless, the auspicious body of the Divine, the light has to be marshalled in a set pattern of radiant rays.

There are two remarkable passages, one in the Rig Veda and a parallel one in the Isavasya Upanishad, where this fact of spiritual experience is recorded. *śrutavid ātreya* exclaims: "There is a Truth covered by a Truth where they unyoke the horses of the Sun; the ten hundreds stood together, there was That One; I saw the greatest (best, most glorious) of the embodied gods."[1] "The standing together of the ten hundreds" means the massing of the rays of the sun. This is made explicit in the Upanishadic verse: "The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid; that do thou remove, O Fosterer for the law of the Truth, for sight. O Fosterer, O sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illumining Sun, O power of the Father of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light; the Lustre which is thy most blessed form of all, that in Thee I behold. The Purusha there and there, He

[1] ऋतेन ऋतमपिहितं ध्रुवं वां सूर्यस्य यत्र विमुचन्त्यश्वान् ।
दश शता सह तस्थुः तदेकं देवानां श्रेष्ठं वपुषामपश्यम् ।।
—(RV. V.62.1)

am I."[1] It is enough for our purpose here to point out that the Rig Vedic seer as well as the Upanishadic bard pray for the massing in a formation, *vyūha*, of the rays of the Eternal Light for a perception of the glorious form of the godhead.[2]

Such is the power of the form-pattern which manifests the embodied deity, that it is called *yantra*. Yantra is an instrument, a machine, a storehouse of power. Rather it contains in itself in a controlled form (from *niyantraṇa* control) the uncontrollable power of the deity. It limits the illimitable by giving it a form and its criss-cross lines bund and channelise in a cognizable form of the deity the vast ocean of Consciousness. It is also known as *cakra*, the wheel representing constant movement. It indicates the dynamis of the Divine and stands for a transmission of the Divine puissance, *cankramaṇāt cakram*.

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[1] हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ।।

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजापत्य व्यूह रश्मीन् समूह ।
तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि ।
योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ।।

— (15.16)

[2] In a striking study of these two passages in his *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, Sri Aurobindo has pointed out how the thought development has taken place from the Vedic period to the Upanishadic times. In his *Siddhanjana*, esoteric commentary on the Rig Veda, Sri Kapali Sastriar has gone into this parallel in greater detail.

Then there is the Mandala which is frequently drawn or made with various colours.[1] The Mandala is used in the case of any deity while the Chakra is specifically intended for a particular deity. "The Mandala is a pictorial representation of the process of the descent or devolution of the One Supreme Consciousness, step by step, layer by layer, into this creation of multitudinous forms. Equally it provides the scheme for the evolutionary return of the individual unit so formed into the plenitude of the Fundamental consciousness at the head of all Manifestation. This symbol scheme is enlivened by a special occult process of the Tantric ritual and conditions of the archetypal creation are recreated, as it were, by this configuration. This frame work is used by the practitioner for the evocation and precipitation of the cosmic process of distintegration and re-integration in his individual mould. Thus, the Mandala is no decorative imagery for a ritual. It provides a potent material focus for the operation of subtler forces within and without."[2]

Worship through Chakra is more abstract than worship, through *pratimā*, image, which fashions for the deity hands, feet and other limbs. The Chakra like the Mantra leads one to the

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[1] In South India, it is a practice in most of the homes to draw a *mandala* in front of the house early morning to bring in auspiciousness and to ward off evil. The Tamil name for *mandala* is *kolam*, guise, as it contains in disguise the Divine Power.

[2] M. P. Pandit: *Studies in the Tantras and the Veda.*

direct perception of the Divine form and that is why so much importance is given to the Chakra in Tantric worship. In the Chakra are caught the lines of beauty, harmony and symmetry on which the eternal geometrician fashions the universes. And so they are drawn with straight lines, triangles, circles and squares as constituents. The lotus motif is also largely employed. Of course these are all symbolic.[1]

The circle represents the principle which has no beginning, no ending, perfectly symmetrical and at all points equidistant from the centre. It indicates the realm of radiations from the one centre, at times an enclosure, a periphery, a circumscribed field of action. The triangle represents the triple principle of creation, the lower triple worlds as well as the higher. It points out to the one that is threefold, the *yoni*, the origin, the source of all things. Usually isosceles or equilateral triangles are employed. A triangle with apex turned up indicates a broad-based one-pointed aspiration rising from the depths to the heights. The Tantra calls it by the significant

[1] "Symbols of various kinds were always in vogue in the religious rites and worship of the earlier races in other countries also and not only in India. Certain symbols are geometrical expressions—circle, triangle, square and other figures. We now know that Cross was there as a symbol long before Jesus Christ. But the bases of these symbols, it must be borne in mind, are to be formed in the inner and the psychic grounds, they are visions, signifying certain truths to the inner and awakened intelligence of the disciple of the secret path"

— Sri Kapali Sastriar in *Lights on the Veda.*

(Collected works: Volume One)

name *vahni koṇa*, the cone of fire. This is the fire of aspiration which is ever burning in the heart of the sadhaka and which carries (*vahni*, *vah* to bear) on its crest his surrender to the Divine. The triangle with the apex downwards is the responding Sakti, the grace of the Divine Mother, the origin of all things. The well-known *ṣatkoṇa* which is formed by the superimposition of a triangle with apex downwards over a triangle with apex upwards signifies a rising aspiration and a responding grace, the ascent of the being and the descent of the deity, the dynamic Sakti superimposed on the heart of the static supine Siva.

The lotus is a flower which raises its head along with the rising sun and droops down with the setting of the sun. It is the flower which eminently responds to the play of Light and it blossoms opening out petal by petal, signifying gradual unfoldment of the latent powers in the being. That is why the centres of consciousness in the subtle body are picturesquely described as lotuses and the lotus motif plays a significant part in the diagrammatic representation as the Chakra. To distinguish the figures in the diagrams, the words *koṇa*, angle or corner, *asra* edge, *ara* spoke and *dala* petal are used. It is proper to use the word *ara* spoke when the Chakra or the wheel is mentioned and to use the word *dala* petal when the *padma* or lotus is spoken of. But in practice, the words are indiscriminately used as in the case of Sahasrara Padma when Sahasradala Padma or Sahasrara Chakra is meant. The Tantrics are fond

of using code-words which they employ in the description of Chakras. This is partly to protect the secret from the uninitiate but largely to confound the critic. For example, *vasu koṇa* means an eight-cornered figure as the Vasus are eight. *manvasra* or *bhuvanāsra* is the fourteen-edged figure, as the Manus or the worlds, *bhuvanas*, are fourteen in number. This code has to be learnt.

When the Chakra is conceived as the material manifestation of the Deity, all the emanations of the Deity are also conceived as stationed in the Chakra. The main deity, *pradhāna*, takes abode in the centre of the Chakra while its emanations gather round the Pradhana as the *parivāra devatās*. The worship is done to the *parivāras* and then to the *pradhāna*.

The Chakra is used for individual worship, no doubt. "But the problem is not of the individual only. His aim, his endeavour is a part, a segment-significant one though-of the larger issue facing the collectivity of which he is a member. Man does not live all by himself. He lives amidst his fellow beings and whether he wills or not, he is influenced by his environment much more than it is influenced by him. The Tantra Sastra recognises this fact and seeks to correlate their solutions in a way that is mutually enriching. It gives, so to say, a way of life, a religion to the society also, so that both the individual and the aggregate can join and help each other in their common effort which is to seek and realise the Harmony and Joy of the Spirit in

this terrestrial creation."[1] And it is towards this end the community worship known as Chakra Puja is instituted. Here the sadhaka and his co-sadhakas—no distinction being made as to male and female, as worship of God is open to both the sexes—sit together in the form of the Chakra of the chosen deity even as the deity takes abode in the Chakra as *pradhāna* along with its *parivāras* and conduct the worship. The main purpose of the esoteric circle of worshippers is to identify themselves as a group with the Chakra which is the form-pattern of the chosen deity along with its emanations. The worship always pre-supposes a division as the worshipper and the worshipped. But through this very division the identity is reached. In Chakra-puja, identity is established between one sadhaka and the other and as a group with the Deity. The group becomes the Chakra and worships the Chakra, *śivo bhūtvā śivam yajet.*

Thus the concept of Chakra puja in the Tantra is a bold one, a practical means to convert the community of men into an assembly of gods.

[1] M. P. Pandit: *Lights on the Tantra.*

III. THE KING OF CHAKRAS

"*The japa of the king of Mantras, the worship of the king of Chakras and the recital of the occult Names are the fruits of no little tapas.*"[1] —Lalita Sahasranama

"*Whoever worships daily thy sacred yantra of forty-three corners, O Goddess, his feet I adore.*"[2]

—Sri Vasishtha Ganapati Muni

The Chakra we have taken up for study is the Sri Chakra, the most celebrated and potent Yantra mentioned in the Tantra Sastra. It is famous as the eternal abode of Lalita, the Mother of Grace, who has her play, far transcending all the worlds, *lokān atītya lalaté*. It is said in the *lalitā sahasra nāma* that seeking her audience there came crores of Brahmas with their consorts, Saraswatis, crores of Narayanas with their Lakshmis and crores of Sivas with their spouses, the Gowris.[3] From this description one can understand the cosmic magnitude of the great Deity. In the cosmos, there are myriads and myriads of universes which undergo the triple process of creation, maintenance and des-

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[1] मन्त्रराजजपश्चैव चक्रराजार्चनं तथा ।
रहस्यनामपाठश्च नाल्पस्य तपसः फलम् ।।

[2] पावकसागरकोणं यस्तव पावनयन्त्रम् ।
पूजयति प्रतिघस्रं देवि भजामि तदङ्घ्रिम् ।। — *indraṇī saptaśati*

[3] सेवार्थमागतास्तत्र ब्रह्माणीब्रह्मकोटयः ।
लक्ष्मीनारायणानां च कोटयः समुपागताः ।
गौरीकोटिसमेतानां रुद्राणामपि कोटयः ।।

truction. Presiding over these functions for each universe, there is a Brahma and a Saraswati, a Vishnu and a Lakshmi and a Siva and a Parvati. All these myriads of gods and goddesses derive their authority and power from the Supreme Goddess Lalita, Her most Imperial Majesty, *parā bhattārikā*. She is the Beauty *par excellence* in the triple states, *tripurasundari*, the Empress of all sovereignities, *rājarājeśvari*. Hence her abode is fittingly called the king of Chakras, *cakrarāja*.

Verily, the *sri cakra* is the king of Chakras, for it contains and sustains all other chakras in the same way as the Divine Mother, the abiding Deity in the Sri Chakra is the source and sustenance of all the gods and goddesses. A glance at Sri Chakra will show how beautiful, symmetrical and harmonious the whole diagrammatical representation is. In no other Chakra one finds such a magnificent mapping of the cosmic magnetic fields, such a comprehensive coverage of the eternal verities. Delicate and sharp are the lines and angles; round and smooth are the curves and petals. Perfect in form, symmetrical in proportion, imposing is the intricate pattern. The Tantrics could have found no better symbol than this to represent the majestic Tripurasundari. The Tantra says that the worship of any deity can be conducted in Sri Chakra as this is the foundation, basis and continent of all the other chakras. Sri Chakra is the most auspicious, doing the highest good to the devotee. That is the reason for the installation of

Sri Chakra in centres of worship.[1] Acharya Shankara is celebrated for arranging such installations in the centres of worship he visited or established during his *digvijaya*.

Be it noted that the Chakra is not called Tripurasundari Chakra, or Lalita Chakra, but just Sri Chakra. *sri* is a prefix added to the words to denote auspiciousness. The Tantrics hold that knowledge about sculpture etc., is no knowledge at all; Only the knowledge leading to liberation, the *vidyā* of the goddess, Sri Vidya is *the* knowledge that matters.[2] Similarly, the Chakra of the goddess alone is *the* Chakra, Sri Chakra. Whenever anybody mentions simply Sri Chakra without any special appellation, every body understands that the Chakra of Chakras, the geometrical projection of paramount power, is meant.

Let us now examine the other names current for this Chakra. The Chakra is drawn by the superimposition of five triangles with apex downwards, over four triangles with apex upwards. It is a configuration of nine triangles and hence the name *navayoni cakra*. It is also called simply *nava cakra*, as there are nine Chakras starting from

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[1] Sri Kapali Sastriar records in his book *The Maharshi* that he was shown in Sri Ramanashram. Tiruvannamalai, the Sri Chakram made of solid gold and a *Meru* in *silā* (solid rock). To quote his words: "I do not remember to have seen such a big-sized Meru in rock though I have myself worshipped one made of gold (small size)".

[2] न शिल्पादिज्ञानयुक्ते विद्वच्छब्दः प्रयुज्यते ।
मोक्षैकहेतुविद्या सा श्रीविद्यैव न संशयः ।। — *brahmāṇḍa purāṇā*

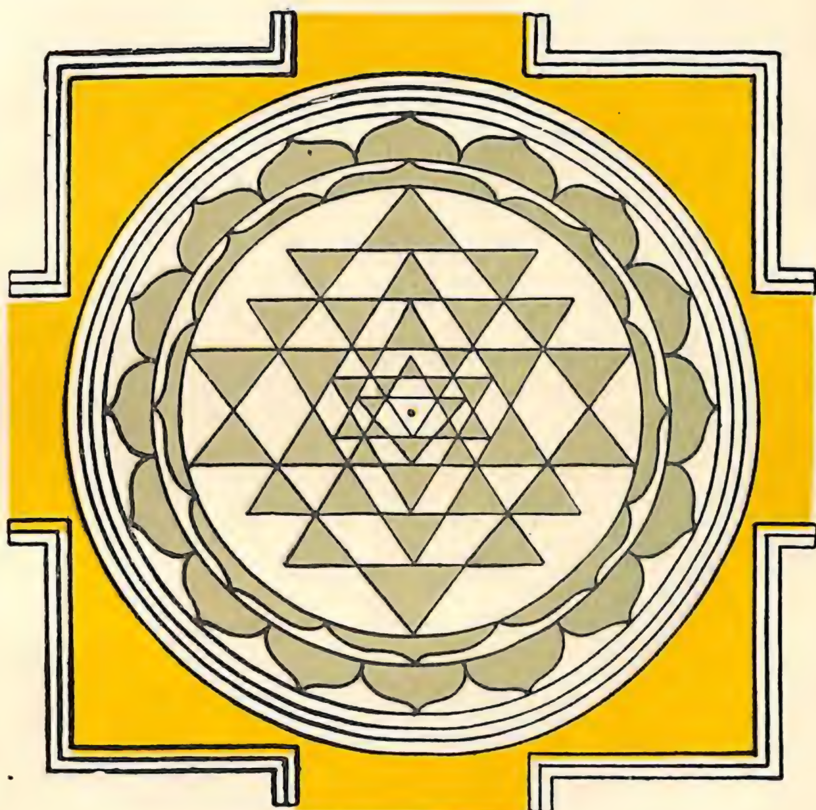


Illustration 2
Yellow Periphery: *Trailokyamohana Cakra*

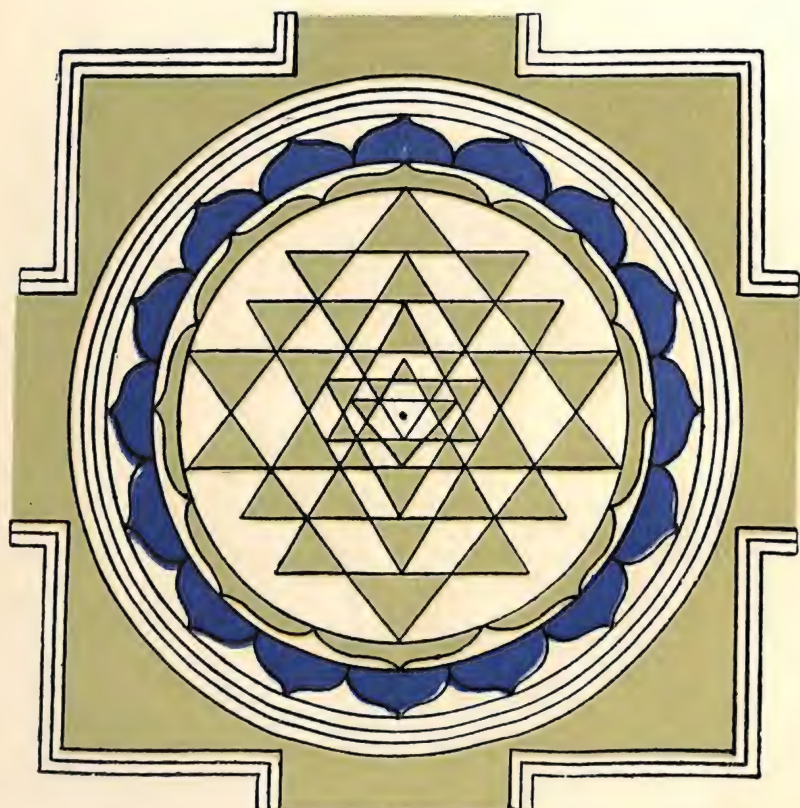


Illustration 3
Blue Sixteen-petalled Lotus: *Sarvāśāparipuraka Cakra*

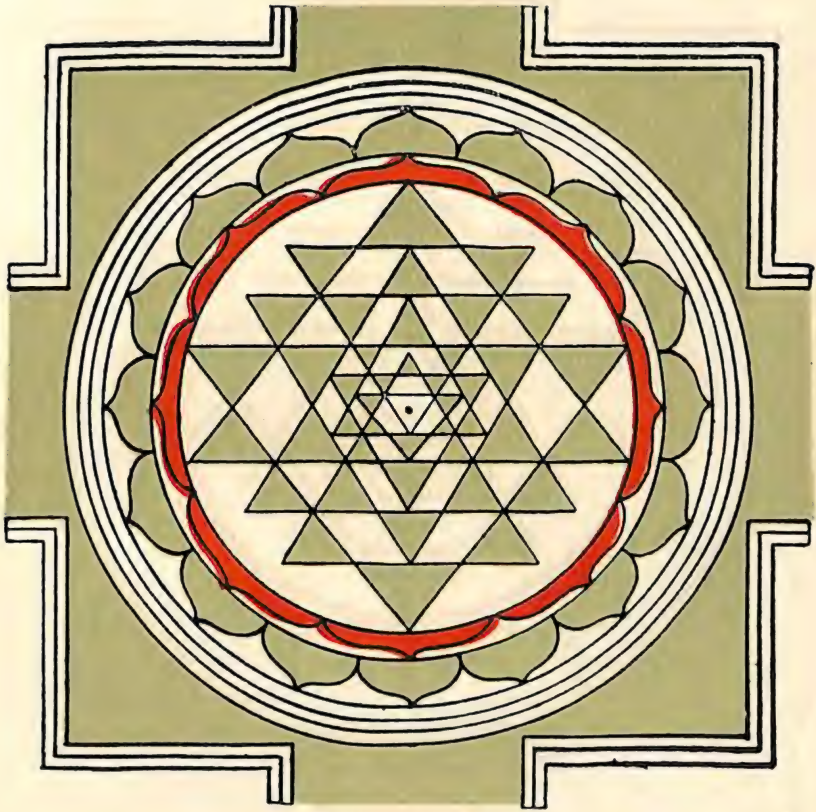


Illustration 4
Red Eight-petalled Lotus: *Sarvasankṣobhaṇa Cakra*

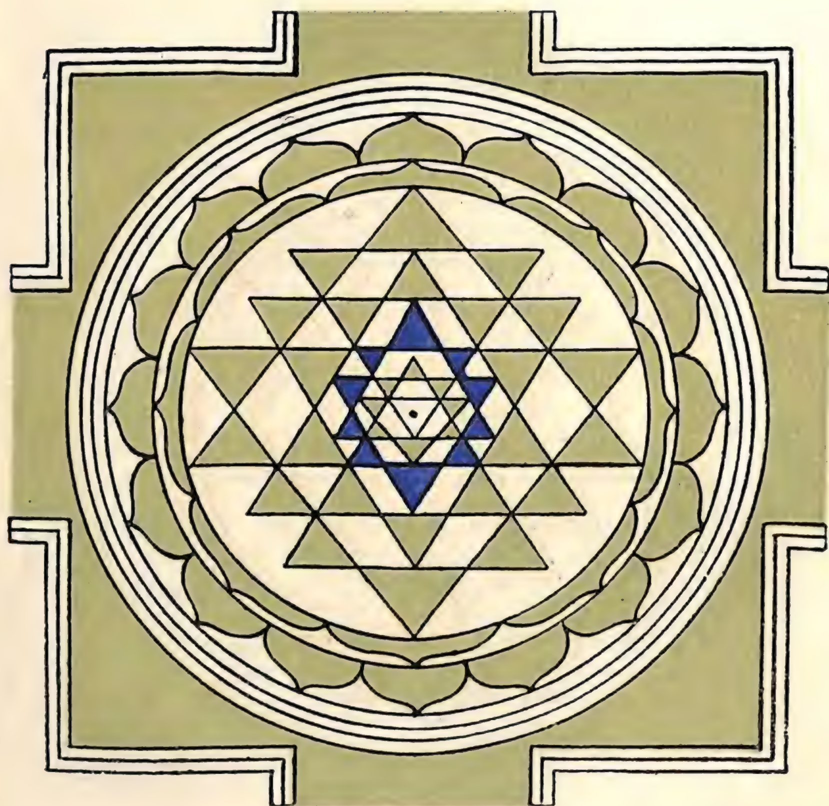


Illustration 7
Blue Ten Triangles: _ *Sarvarakṣākara Cakra*

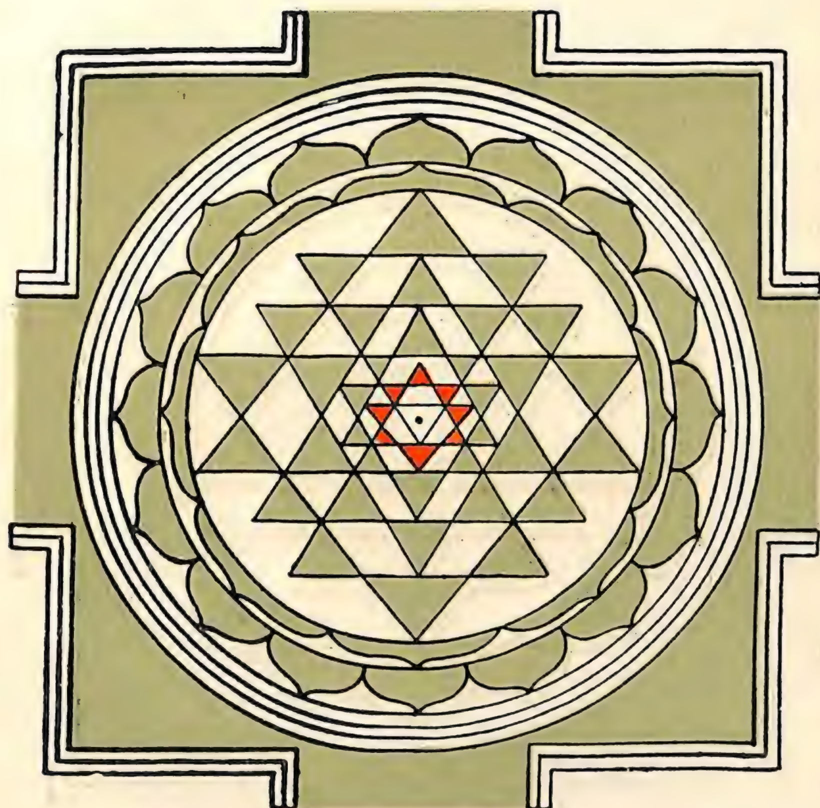


Illustration 8
Red Eight Triangles: *Sarvarogahara Cakra*



Illustration 9
White Triangle Inverted: *Sarvasiddhiprada Cakra*

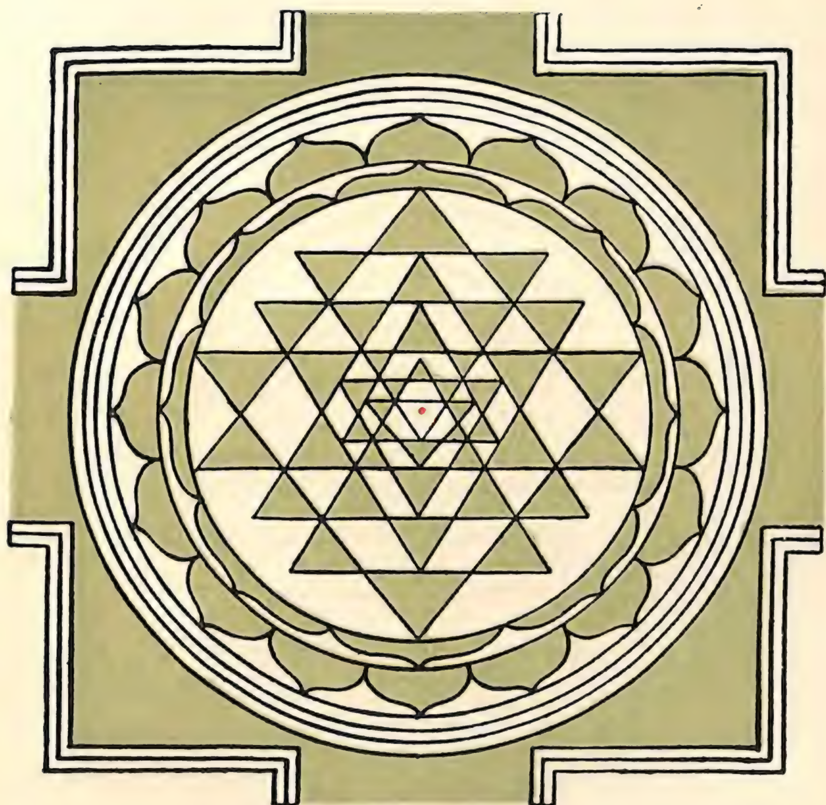


Illustration 10
Red Point: *Sarvānandamaya Cakra*

bhūpura to *bindu* in the body of the Sri Chakra. Counting the primary triangle, the eight triangles in *aṣṭa koṇa,* the twenty triangles in the outer and inner *daśāras* and the fourteen triangles in the fourteen-edged figure, there are forty three triangles in the Sri Chakra and hence the popular name *tricatvārimśat koṇa.* The *soundarya lahari* describes the Sri Chakra as composed of fortyfour triangles. This, Sri Bhaskararaya explains, comes about by taking the Bindu also as a point-triangle.[1]

viyat cakra is another name given—the Chakra of *viyat,* Space, *ākāśa.* Sri Chakra is worshipped in the heart-space *dahara ākāśa* as well as in the outer space, *bāhya ākāśa* in an engraved or in an elevated form made of copper etc. The name *mātṛkā cakra* expresses the fact that Sri Chakra is not only the abode of the Divine Mother but also of all her powers, personalities and emanations. It is said that the supreme Goddess Lalita alone knows the full effect of the worship of her Chakra.[2]

Thus, Sri Chakra, Chakraraja, Navayoni chakra, Viyat Chakra, Matrika Chakra, all denote the abiding place and form-pattern of Lalita Mahatripurasundari Para Bhattarika, the great Goddess Supreme, the Divine Mother. Let us proceed to explain the emergence of this great Sri Chakra, according to the perception of the Tantric Seers.

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[1] त्रिचत्वारिंशतः त्रिकोणानां गणनम्। यत्तु सौन्दर्यलहर्यां चतुश्चत्वारिंशत् वसुदलेत्यादि गणनं तद्बिन्दुसाहित्याभिप्रायेण ॥

— *setubandha*

[2] सा वेत्ति ललिता देवी स्वचक्रार्चनजं फलम्।

— *brahmānda purāṇa*

IV. THE EMERGENCE OF SRI CHAKRA

"*That One lived without breath by his self-law, there was nothing else nor aught beyond it. In the beginning, Darkness was hidden by darkness, all this was an ocean of inconscience. When universal being was concealed by fragmentation, then by the greatness of its energy, That One was born. That moved at first as desire within, which was the primal seed of mind.*"[1]

—Rig Veda

"*When the Supreme Sakti of her own will takes the form of the universe and looks at her own throb, then the Chakra comes into being.*[2] — Yogini Hrdaya

"*This comprises of nine origins, the vast dense mass of Consciousness—Bliss.*"[3] — Ibid

"The universe is an objectification of the Supreme, as though He objectified Himself out of Himself in order to see Himself, to live Himself, to know Himself and in order that there may be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising Him as its origin and uniting with Him consciously to manifest Him in the Becoming.

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[1] Sri Aurobindo's translation.

आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ।
तम आसीत् तमसा गूळ्हमग्रे ऽप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् ।
तुच्छ्येनाभ्वपिहितं यदासीत् तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ।
कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।

–RV. X. 129

[2] यदा सा परमा शक्तिः स्वेच्छया विश्वरूपिणीं ।
स्फुरत्तामात्मनः पश्येत् तदा चक्रस्य सम्भवः ।। –(1.9–10)

[3] नवयोन्यात्मकमिदं चिदानन्दघनं महत् । –(1.24)

The universe has no other reason. The goal is a union of what has been created with the creator, a conscious, voluntary and free union in the Manifestation. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work. She takes up this creation which is apparently wholly inconscient, but which contains the Supreme Consciousness and the unique Reality, and she labours so that all this may grow, become aware of itself and realise itself fully."

In these lucid luminous words, the Mother explains the mystery of manifestation. She says: "Nothing can manifest that is not previously contained in what exists. All progress, all perfectioning is the result of an inner effort on the part of something which is present and which seeks to manifest. That is to say, it is the principle that comes first, the expression afterwards. If there was not an eternal Principle, a Supreme Deity, there would never have been any universe, because something does not come out of nothing. The will of the Divine is to manifest, not to remain altogether withdrawn in inactivity and an absolute silence; if the Divine Consciousness were really an inaction of unmanifesting bliss, there would never have been any creation." And again, She affirms: "The Supreme manifested himself to himself so that he may become conscious of himself." [1]

[1] *Path to Perfection:* compiled from the writings of the Mother by Keshavmurti.

According to the Tantras, especially of the *śākta* school, there is one Reality, a Transcendental Absolute immutable, ineffable. It is the Supreme Effulgence, *prakāśa*. It is the Supreme appearing to be inconscient, but containing in itself the seed of consciousness. When it is self-moved to manifest something of itself, there is a movement, a deliberation on itself, an Idea.

In the words of the Seer-Poet:

> "A nameless movement, an unthought Idea,
> Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,
> Something that wished but knew not how to be,
> Teased the Inconscient to wake Ignorance."[1]

To this deliberation, the Tantrics give the name *vimarśa*. *vimarśa* means reflecting, considering, pondering over. The Absolute ponders over itself, appraises itself. As the *kāmakalā vilāsa* explains picturesquely, *vimarśa* is the mirror in which the *prakāśa* reviews itself. What is the genesis of this primordial movement? This is due to an impulsion, desire, *kāma*. Kama is not a word coined by the Tantrics to denote this prime desire. It is a very old word used in the famous Rig Vedic hymn of creation, the bold perception of the seer Prajapati Parameshthi.[2] This desire is a willed desire.[3] Mind has not yet come into being. And so the Veda

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[1] Sri Aurobindo: Savitri. (I.1)

[2] कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।

—RV. X–129.

[3] Hence the Upanishadic perception:

so kāmayata bahusyām prajāyeyeti.

calls this as the primal seed of the mind *manaso retaḥ prathamam*. Sri Aurobindo describes this as an unthought Idea, while the Tantra acclaims it as divine deliberation, *vimarśa*.

Again, desire comes by division. A movement means that the Infinite has to assume a finiteness, a direction. *tucchya*, fragmentation is the word used in the Veda. The Tantra gives the name *kalā* a digit, a portion. Hence the name *kāmakalā* for the primordial desire.

If we may call *prakāśa* as the original Shiva, the deliberation which is latent in him, the *vimarśa*, can be called as the original Shakti. The colour of *prakaśa*, light, is pure white while *vimarśa* which denotes activity, the forerunner of *rajo guṇa*,[1] is conceived as red. As we know, the first impulsion of darkness towards light takes the form of dawn, which is red. Therefore, the Shakti who is in the form of *vimarśa*, *vimarśa rūpiṇi*, is conceived as red and she is verily the digit of desire, *kāmakalā*. The desireful supreme entity becomes the Kameshwara and his impulse of desire, the Kameshwari.

Now this deliberation, this impulse of desire, creates a stir, a throb, *spanda*, which vibrates as *nāda*. Initially, this Nada concentrates itself into a point. This point is the *bindu*, the seed of sound. It contains in itself in a highly concentrated potent form the two in one form of Shiva-Shakti, Kameshwara—Kameshwari. This is known as *para bindu*,

[1] The colours of the Gunas, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas are respectively white, red and dark. *ajām ekām lohitaśukla kṛṣṇām*.

the Supreme Bindu containing in itself all that have to be created. When it is in a mood to manifest, it comes down lower forming the *apara bindu* or the *śabdabrahman*. This Bindu which is again Shiva and Shakti in one[1] swells *ucchūna*. The point-circle assumes a radius. A polarisation of Shiva and Shakti takes place; there is an unfoldment and there emerge two more Bindus, the division of Shiva and Shakti, beginning the creation. The whole creation is full of the dual poise of the static Shiva and the dynamic Shakti. Thus from one *para bindu* three Bindus emerge for manifestation. It will be observed that in creation, everything is not fully created, completely manifest. There are many things latent, some partially evolved, some beginning to be evolved.

A latent but potent status containing the Shiva-Shakti in one, a static status purely of Shiva and a dynamic status purely of Shakti, all these three are simultaneously found in manifestation. Thus, the three Bindus form the primary triangle, the manifestation which is a product of three *guṇas*, the triad, *tripuṭi*, or the three fields, *tripura*.

It will be noted that without the first deliberation *vimarśa*, this activity would not have started at all. From *vimarśa* has come about *nāda*, from *nāda* the *para bindu*, and from this the three Bindus forming the primary triangle. As activity is the

[1] To illustrate, the Bindu is compared to a grain which under its encircling sheath contains two cotyledons.

poise of Shakti, she is called as the form of Vimarsa, Nada, Parabindu and the Trikona (triangle) in the various stages of her descent for manifestation. It will be seen that the primary triangle is nothing but a derivative of Vimarsa. It should also be noted that from Prakasa downwards every poise contains both Shiva and Shakti, the inseparables, in varying degrees of concentration.

The primary impulse to manifest rises in a crescendo of *nāda*, swells in peals of *śabda* and goes on reverberating till its faint cadences are caught in the articulate speech of man. As the Veda says, the three steps of the Word are hidden and the fourth step is available to man for articulate speech.[1] The alphabets are the foundations on which the structure of the speech and language is raised. The Tantrics call the alphabets *mātṛkās*, the little Mothers, the dimunitive derivatives of the Supreme Mother and hold that by catching this tail-end, one can by a reversal of consciousness arrive at the head of all sounds, the primordial *nāda*. If we look at the Sanskrit alphabets, we find that the three Bindus of the primary triangle are represented by corresponding letters. The penultimate and last letters of the vowels are *am* and *ah*[2]. The dot which is placed on the head of the letter *a* corresponds to the *apara bindu*, the Shabda Brahman, which is significantly called *anusvāra* (*anusṛtya svarati*), resonant with Nada. When this

[1] गुहा त्रीणि निहिता नेङ्गयन्ति तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति ।
—(RV. I. 164·45)

[2] अं अः

apara bindu releases itself into creation, there emerge the two Bindus represented by the two dots which also bear a significant name *visarga* (*sarga*: from *srj* to abandon, leave: therefore *sarga*, creation, self-abandonment of the Lord). It is common knowledge that in the pronounciation of *anusvāra*, one closes the lips and holds the breath while in pronouncing *visarga*, one opens the mouth forcing the breath out.[1] That is why, in the formulation of seed-sounds, the Tantrics use both the *anusvāra* and *visarga*, the former especially as it contains in itself the potent power to manifest.

We have said that the Bindu becomes the triangle. The process goes on. The triangle transforms itself into the eight-edged figure, then to a ten-cornered figure, again to another ten-cornered figure and then to a fourteen-cornered figure and so on. The result is the emergence of Sri Chakra. Thus, the point in the primary triangle transforms itself through a series of lines, triangles, circles and squares to form the great Sri Chakra which is nothing but a representation of the Supreme Consciousness in its various levels. That is why the Tantras say that Sri Chakra is a vast mass of dense Consciousness–Bliss, *cidānanda-ghanam mahat*. When the Supreme Shakti of her own will, takes

[1] The Tamil language which can justly claim a hoary antiquity has only one letter in its vowels instead of the two letters of the Sanskrit Alphabet *am* and *ah*. It consists of three dots arranged in the form of a triangle like this ∴. It is still more remarkable that the name given to this letter is *āydam* which is an exact Tamil translation of the word *vimarśa*.

the form of the universe and looks at her own throb, then the Chakra comes into being. If we delve into the essentials of emergence, Sri Chakra is only the form of Kamakalā,[1] the primordial Divine Desire.

Thus, we see that Sri Chakra is a master plan of manifestation drawn by the divine Draughtsman on the board of the Infinite, a transcript of the Transcendent, a symbol-image of the supernal verities.

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[1] चक्रं कामकलारूपं प्रसारपरमार्थतः ।

—*yogini hṛdaya.*

V. BINDU AND TRIKONA

"*Transcending the tattvas is the Bindu.*"[1]

—Bhairava Yāmala

"*The Rays—even above them are thy two lotus feet*"[2] —Saundarya Lahari

"*This essential Point in the middle of the Chakra is verily the Supreme Sakti; when it swells, it evolves into the patent form of the triangle.*"[3] —Kāmakalā Vilāsa

As the whole Sri Chakra has evolved out of the Bindu and the Trikona, the aspirant should know what these two represent.

The Bindu as we have said, is the *para bindu*, the Supreme Bindu, the Nada that has concentrated itself into a point. This is the centre of the Sri Chakra, the summit of the Chakra in the form of Meru.

From this centre emanate the various lines, triangles and circles culminating in the shape of Sri Chakra. It is very difficult to translate the word *bindu* into English. We may say that it means a point, a drop, zero or cipher. It is the point of contact between the Supreme Creator and his creation, the drop which swells itself into the ocean of consciousness, the zero which gives meaning and value to the myriad numbers, the cipher

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[1] तत्त्वातीतं तु बैन्दवम् ।

[2] मयूखास्तेषामप्युपरि तव पादाम्बुजयुगम् । —(14).

[3] मध्ये चक्रस्य स्यात् परामयं बिन्दुतत्त्वमेवेदम् ।
उच्छूनं तच्च यदा त्रिकोणरूपेण परिणतं स्पष्टम् ।। —(22).

through which everything is deciphered. The Bindu is not a void, *śūnya*. It is not nothing, a Nihil. It contains in itself everything. It can be called a zero. But zero, as popularly understood is a nought. The mathematician can easily demonstrate that it is a wrong notion. From zero, radiate on both sides an infinite continuum of numbers. The Bindu is the nave of the great wheel, Sri Chakra, *paramasya nābhih*, the navel of the Supreme Person from which the whole creation originates.[1]

The Bindu can be considered as a point-circle, not yet having a radius. It can also be thought of as a triangle with no area, a point where the would-be three vertices coincide. In fact, from the Para Bindu, in the stage of evolution appear the three Bindus—the *miśra* Bindu containing the Shiva and the Shakti, the static Shiva Bindu and

[1] Here, on the concept of the Bindu, we would like to share with the reader the revalatory lines of Sri Aurobindo found in his epoch-making epic poem *Savitri:*

There is a zero sign of the Supreme. (III.2)
The zero covers an immortal face. (II.2).
Infinity wore a boundless zero's form. (X.2.)
Being collapsed into a pointless void
That yet was a zero parent of the worlds. (II.8)
A fathomless zero occupied the world. (I.1.)
At first was laid a strange anomalous base,
A void, a cipher of some secret Whole,
Where zero held infinitely in its sum,
And All and Nothing were a single term,
An eternal negative, a matrix Nought,
Into its forms the child is ever born
Who lives for ever in the vasts of God. (II.1.)

the dynamic Shakti Bindu. These three Bindus, as we have explained, form the primary triangle, *mūla trikoṇa*. This triangle represents the creation in its triple aspects. As we would explain in the next chapter, the triad, the *tripuṭi*, the *tripura*, all have their nomenclatures derived from this triangle.

A study of the significant names by which this primary triangle is known will amply reward the earnest seeker. As this is a product of the primordial Divine Desire, the triangle is known as *kāmakalā*. And as all desire, passion and love are the evolutions in various stages of this prime Desire, the triangle is said to indicate the source, the origin, *yoni*, the female principle in creation. It is also known as *vāgbhava* born out of Vāk and is represented by the letter *é*. The vowel *é* in the Sanskrit language when written bears resemblance to the figure of a triangle. Moreover, the letter *a*, being the first letter of the alphabet denotes Shiva while the feminine gender of *a* that is *i* denotes the Shakti. And the combination *é* which denotes the Shiva-Shakti[1] is a fitting symbol of the triangle which again represents the creation wherein Shiva and Shakti have their constant play. Another name given for the triangle is *śṛngāṭa*. It is explained that *śṛnga* denotes the two horns, the two sides of the triangle while *aṭa* denotes the wandering line between them. *śrnga* also means a peak and *śrngāṭa* will be the one who moves in the peaks. This word

[1] अकारः परमशिवः तस्य स्त्री ई पुंयोगलक्षणे ङीप् तयोः संयोगेन एकारनिष्पत्तिः। — Bhaskararaya in *setubandha*

then will be a synonym of *kūṭastha*, the Supreme at the summit unaffected by anything. The primary triangle being at the head of creation is fittingly called *śṛngāta* and the Shakti who abides in the triangle is the Supreme Shakti seated at the head of the creation, *yoni–nilayā*, *kūṭasthā*.[1]

In the human body, the place of the Bindu is at the top of the spinal column in the thousand petalled lotus centre in the head. The *trikoṇa* is at the bottom of the spinal column in the Muladhara, the base-centre. The Divine Mother is the coiled energy Kundalini who traverses up and down the path between the two centres in her courses of evolution and involution. As the static principle predominates in the Para Bindu, it is known as the *linga*, the symbol of the male principle, while the *trikoṇa* is the *yoni*, the index of the female principle. The whole creation is the outcome of the union of *linga* and *yoni*, the Bindu and the Trikona. It is the bliss of this union that permeates through the whole creation as its sap and sustenance.

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[1] *lalitā sahasranāma*

VI. THE THREEFOLD AND NINEFOLD DIVISION

"*Three powers of Light uphold three luminous worlds divine.*"[1] —Rig Veda

"*The three cities, the three paths all-seeing where is located the immutable, beyond words.*

Presiding over this is the ageless ancient, the supreme glory of the gods."[2] —Tripuropanishad

"*They bore the nine origins, the nine chakras, the nine combinations and the nine yoginis. The nine Mudras and the nine Mantras made them preside well over the nine planes.*"[3] —Tripuropanishad

"*The symbology of the chakra is threefold as well as ninefold.*"[4] —Yogini Hrdaya

To understand the mystical and spiritual import of Sri Chakra, it is necessary to comprehend certain principles of classification based upon the perception of the Tantric Seers. There is a threefold as well as a ninefold division which brings out fully the significance of the cosmic order that is adumbrated in the formulation of

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[1] त्र्यर्यमा मनुषो देवताता त्री रोचना दिव्या धारयन्त ।
—R.V. V. 29.1.

[2] तिस्रः पुरस्त्रिपथा विश्वचर्षणी यत्राकथा अक्षरा सन्निविष्टा ।
अधिष्ठायैनामजरा पुराणी महत्तरा महिमा देवतानाम् ।। (1)

[3] नवयोनीर्नवचक्राणि दधिरे नवैव योगा नवयोगिनीश्च ।
नवानां चक्रे अधिनाथास्योना नवमुद्रा नवभद्रा महीनाम् ।। (2)

[4] त्रिधा च नवधा चैव चक्रसङ्केतकः पुनः । —(1.73)

Sri Chakra. What is the significance of the number three and the number nine? "For it is well-known that in the occult teachings of some of the ancient peoples, notably the Kabalists, numbers occupy an important place; they are symbols of occult truths, significators, pointers to object of mundane existence or truths of secret knowledge."[1] And again, "a number, any figure is indeed an abstract unit; but at the same time we use it as a symbol signifying the property of division and order attached to things in the objective world or order of thoughts and distinct ideas in the subjective existence. For knowledge of ourselves and others and of the surroundings implies knowledge of distinction and difference in kind and quality or degree and quantity; in fact, it is the finites, the limitations and measures that characterise all creation. The very purpose of the normal human mind seems to be the understanding of distinctions and limitations; for the mind is so constituted and functions that even when a definite whole, a substantial entity confronts it, it surveys and scrutinises it in its several aspects, takes it piecemeal, patches up into a whole conceptually, what is apparently a single and definite whole."[1]

The one *para bindu*, the sole Reality, presents a threefold aspect as the three Bindus for our mental comprehension. By an analysis of the differences and distinctions, the human mind

[1] Sri Kapali Sastriar: The Mystic Quartette and the Human Synthesis (Collected works of T. V. Kapali Sastry: Volume Two: The Book of Lights-2)

arrives at a synthesis. Whenever the triad is spoken of, there is always a certain fourth, *turiyam svid* which transcends the three as well as represents all the three put together *samaṣṭi*. The threefold aspect is known as *tripurā*, *pura* standing for city, place or field of action. The great goddess who subjects herself to the division of the three bindus, *tripura*, is known as Tripurā or Tripurasundari, the Beauty *par excellence* in the triad. The *kālikā purāṇa* says that everything about the goddess is three in number—the triangle, the three girdles of the *bhūpura*, her three-lettered Mantra, her three forms, the triple Kundalini Shakti and her craetion of the trinity—and hence she is known as Tripurā.[1] Because she transcends the triad also, her name is Tripurā. She exists before the creation of the Trinity, before the three Vedas and in dissolution fills the triple worlds.[2] Thus goddess Tripurasundari is in the transcendent Bindu as well as in the three transformed Bindus making up the triangle. In fact, as the Chakra is evolved from the Bindu and the triangle, the entire Chakra is full of the great auspicious Tripurā.[3]

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[1] त्रिकोणं मण्डलं चास्या भूपुरं च त्रिरेखकम् ।
मन्त्रोऽपि त्र्यक्षरः प्रोक्तः तथा रूपत्रयं पुनः ।।

[2] त्रिविधा कुण्डली शक्तिः त्रिदेवानां च सृष्टये ।
सर्वं त्रयं त्रयं यस्मात् तस्मात्तु त्रिपुरा मता ।।

त्रिमूर्तिसर्गाच्च पुरा भवत्वात् त्रयीमयत्वाच्च पुरैव देव्याः ।
लये त्रिलोक्या अपि पूरकत्वात् प्रायोऽम्बिकायास्त्रिपुरेति नाम ।।

[3] एवमेतन्महाचक्रं महाश्रीत्रिपुरामयम् ।
niiyāṣoḍaśikārṇava (Patala, 1.48.)

The transcendent effulgence whose form is consciousness and whose nature is beauty and bliss restricts its splendour, *sankucat prabham,* when it measures itself out as the triangle which is nothing but the *tripuṭi,* triad, the measured, the measurer and the measure.[1] The great goddess Lalita in the Bindu becomes Kameshwari, Vajreshwari and Bhagamalini of the triangle. Kāma is love and so denotes the moon. Vajra is lightning, the fire in space and Bhaga is the sun. The great effulgence assumes its threefold aspect of moon, sun and fire, Soma, Surya and Agni, the three *khandas* of the *śrividyā mantra.* Again the triangle is the manifestation of the Devis *vāmā, jyesṭhā* and *raudri* with their consorts *brahma, viṣṇu* and *rudra.* The *samaṣṭi* Shakti in the Bindu is *ambikā* with her consort *iśvara.* After dissolution, the goddess alone exists, after having swallowed the entire thirtysix *tattwas, kabalīkṛta niśśeṣa tattvagrāmasvarūpiṇi.*

When creation has to start, she has to vomit what she has swallowed. Then she becomes *vāmā* (*vamana* vomitting).[2] In maintaining the creation, she is the first one *jyeṣṭhā* and during dissolution the terrific *raudri.*

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[1] चैतन्यमात्मनो रूपं निसर्गानन्दसुन्दरम् ।।
मेयमातृप्रमामानप्रसरैः सङ्कुचत्प्रभम् ।
शृङ्गाटरूपमापन्नमिच्छाज्ञानक्रियात्मकम् ।।

—*yogini hrdaya*

[2] विश्वं वमति यस्मात् तद्वामेयं परिकीर्तिता ।

—*jnānārṇava tantra,* 1.14

The Tamil mystics talk of the Supreme as one who eats and spits out the universe *ulagelām undu umizhnda uttaman.*

If the triangle is taken to be *kāmakalā*, the derivative of the Divine Desire, then it is a manifestation of *icchā*, *jnāna*, *kriyā* Shaktis, the forces of will, knowledge and action.[1] The *turīya* Shakti in the Bindu is known as *sāntā*, the quiscent Shakti. If the triangle is taken to be Vāgbhava, born of Vāk, it is a manifestation of *paśyanti*, the word that perceives, *madhyamā*, the word in the intermediate subtle region and *vaikharī* the expressed word from the throat. In the Bindu is *parā vāk*, the word which is beyond, unmanifest, but turned towards manifestation. Similarly we can look upon the triangle as the manifestation of the three gunas *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and the Bindu, as beyond the gunas, *guṇātīta*. The triangle is also a manifestation of the three states, *jāgrat*, the waking state, *svapna* the dream state and *suṣupti* the sleep state, along with the enjoyers of those states, Vaishwanara, the universal Male, Taijasa the Inhabitant in Luminous Mind and Prājna, the Lord of Wisdom. The Bindu is the Turiya, devoid of all states.[2]

Thus a threefold classification is adopted to comprehend the symbology of Sri Chakra. But it should not be forgotten that each one of the

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[1] The Upanishads describe the creation in these three ways—*so'kāmayata*. He desired. *tadaikṣata* That saw and *sa tapo'tapyata*. He energised himself by tapas. They respectively denote the forces of will, knowledge and action, *icchā*, *jnāna* and *kriyā* Shaktis.

[2] विश्वरूपा जागरिणीं स्वपन्ती तैजसात्मिका ।
सुप्ता प्राज्ञात्मिका तुर्या सर्वावस्थाविवर्जिता ।।

—*lalitā sahasranāma.*

triad is again threefold. For instance, in the waking state, the whole being is not wakeful. Some parts are awake, some are asleep, some are in the dream state. In the *jāgrat* state itself we have the triad *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *suṣupti*. Similarly, in creation everything is not fully created. Some are fully manifest, some partially and others are dissolved. The *sṛṣṭi* consists of the triad, *sṛṣṭi*, *sthiti* and *saṃhāra*. The goddess Tripura herself is threefold, *tripurā*, *trividhā—bālā* the young one, *tripurasundari* the beautiful and *tripurabhairavi* the terrific. And so, as each of the triad contains a triad, the division becomes ninefold. The Sri Chakra is a configuration of nine triangles, five triangles with apex downwards superimposed on four triangles with apex upwards. From Bhupura to Bindu it consists of nine chakras. There are nine Chakreshwaris, nine classes of *yoginis* and nine *mudras*. Sri Chakra is ninefold. The Mantra is ninefold as it essentially contains only nine letters. The Masters are nine in number. The human body has nine apertures. And so an identity is sought to be established between the Chakra, Deity, Mantra, Guru and the Sadhaka's body.

The threefold and ninefold classifications play such an important part that without an analytical approach of this kind it is very difficult to arrive at a synthesis of the various schemes of world-existences that are outlined in the figure of the Sri Chakra.

VII. THE NINE CHAKRAS

"*The point, the triangle, the eight-cornered figure, the two ten-edged figures, the fourteen-cornered figure, eight petals, sixteen petals, the three circles and the three Bhupuras—This is mentioned as the Sri Chakra of the Supreme Deity.*"[1] —Yāmala

There are nine chakras in the Sri Chakra. At times they are reckoned as eight by not counting the Bindu.[2] These nine Chakras have each a distinct form and a distinct name.

Proceeding from the outermost to the inner, let us describe the Chakras. The outermost is a square *caturasra* of three lines, the lines one inside the other, opening out in the middle of each side as four portals. This is known as the *bhūpura*, the earth-stretch. (Ill. 2) This is the ground-plane if Sri Chakra is considered as graded elevations, *meru*. Through the portals in the Bhupura one enters the precincts. Immediately inside the square are three concentric circles which serve as three girdles *trivalaya*. The space between the sides of the square and the circumference of the outermost circle, between *bhūpura* and *trivalaya*, is known as the *trailokya mohana cakra*, the enchanter of the triple world.

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[1] बिन्दुत्रिकोणवसुकोणदशारयुग्ममन्वश्रनागदलसंयुतषोडशारम् ।
वृत्तत्रयं च धरणीसदनत्रयं च श्रीचक्रमेतदुदितं परदेवतायाः ।।

[2] अष्टा चक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या ।

—*aruṇopaniṣad* (15, 16)

Inside the three girdles are sixteen petals arranged in the form of petals of a lotus. This series is known as *sarvāśā paripūraka cakra*, the fulfiller of all desires. (Ill. 3) Next are the eight petals arranged in a similar fashion. These form the *sarva sankṣobhaṇa cakra*, the agitator of all. (Ill. 4) Then we come to the figure formed by super-imposition of five triangles with apex downwards on four triangles with apex upwards. This figure so formed consists of fortythree small triangles. The outermost fourteen-triangled figure, *caturdasa koṇa* is known as *sarva saubhāgyada cakra*, the giver of all auspiciousness. (Ill. 5) The next figure inside made up of ten triangles known as outer *daśāra* is called *sarvārtha sādhaka cakra*, the accomplisher of all purposes. (Ill. 6) Inside there is again a ten-cornered figure, the inner *daśāra*, *sarva rakṣākara cakra*, the giver of all protection. (Ill. 7) Then comes the eight-edged figure known as *aṣṭa koṇa* which is the *sarvarogahara cakra*, the remover of all diseases. (Ill. 8) Inside is the inverted primary triangle, known as *sarva siddhiprada cakra*, the giver of all accomplishments. (Ill. 9) Innermost is the Bindu, *sarvānandamaya cakra* full of all Bliss. (Ill. 10)

If we remember that Sri Chakra has emanated from *kāmakalā*, the digit of desire, the primordial desire of one that is Love and Bliss and each Chakra is a gradual unfoldment of the previous one, the significance of the names of Chakras becomes clear. In the outermost the Chakra appears as *trailokya mohana*, the enchanter of the triple world. The being in his triple state comes under the spell and

can rest content here for a very long time. If he proceeds further, there is a hankering in his heart for what, he does not know yet. This takes the form of various desires and these are fulfilled in the *sarvāśā paripūraka*. But, fulfilment of desires leads one nowhere; there comes discontentment, an unrest and an agitation. This state of agitation, *sarva sankṣobhada* is good because only from here one proceeds to the inner precincts of progress. Once the step is taken, all auspiciousness is granted, *sarva saubhāgyada*, all ends are accomplished, *sarvārtha sādhaka*. The state is stabilised by affording all protection *sarva rakṣākara* and by removing all discord, disharmony and disease, *sarva rogahara*, leading to perfection in all things, *sarva siddhiprada*. Then the culmination is the identity with the original Bliss and Love *sarvānandamaya* from which the whole thing has started.

VIII. THE TWO IN ONE

"*Equally important equally powerful, between them interwoven is the all force, the ageless source of the universe.*"[1]

—Tripuropanishad

"*One concentrated mass of the couple Shiva-Shakti has the whole world as a morsel and reigns supreme.*"[2]

—Kāmakalā Vilāsa

"*The revolving universe of the mobile and the immobile, know this to be constituted of Shiva and Shakti.*"[3]

—Kāmikāgama

"*To get what I desire, I bow down—why is the object not mentioned? Shall I say 'the couple' in singular or in dual according to grammar?*"[4]

—Nilakantha Dikshita

"*Sri Chakra is the one body of the Shiva couple.*"[5]

—Bhairava Yāmala

It is popularly held that the Tantra, especially of the *śākta* school emphasises the paramountcy of Shakti, assigning an inferior place in the scheme of things to Shiva. The oft-quoted line that without Shakti, Shiva is a mere corpse, *śava* comes in handy. And the great symbolic

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[1] समप्रधानौ समसत्त्वौ समोतयोः समशक्तिरजरा विश्वयोनिः ।
—(14)

[2] शिवशक्तिमिथुनपिण्डः कबलीकृतविश्वमण्डलो जयति ।
—(5)

[3] शिवशक्त्यात्मकं विद्धि जगदेतच्चराचरम् ।

[4] वन्दे वाञ्छितलाभाय कर्म किं तन्न कथ्यते ।
किं दम्पतिमिति ब्रूयामुताहो दम्पती इति ।।

[5] श्रीचक्रं शिवयोर्वपुः ।

act of Kali dancing on the breast of Shiva is cited as an illustration. But this is a superficial understanding of the Tantric perception. The figure of Kali dancing on the breast of Shiva has to be taken as a whole; there are no two entities one dancing on the other. The figure is a gestalt of both the dynamic and static poises. Be it noted that when Kali dances, Shiva also dances. Lalita may have her *lāsya*; but this does not preclude Ishwara from having his *tāṇḍava*. The truth of the matter is that the so-called static Shiva is also dynamic and the famous dynamic Shakti is at times static. When we state that the whole universe consisting of the mobile and the immobile *carācara* is a consummation of the union of Shiva and Shakti, we should not perceive it as a fusion, somehow brought about, of two water-tight compartments of the static and the dynamic. For there is nothing like an absolute mobility or an absolute immobility in the universe. There is a certain amount of mobility inherent and innate in immobility and a certain poise of immobility apparent in mobility.[1] Shiva and Shakti are no two separate entities. Shiva is in Shakti and Shakti is in Shiva. It is not in an abstract philosophical sense, that the Tantrics postulate the theory that Shiva and Shakti are one and the same. For them it is a concrete spiritual experience, a living reality. The whole universe is a standing testimony to this fact. The followers of

[1] For instance, a piece of stone apparently inert and immobile has a lot of atomic activity inside. A spinning top moving at great speed has a poise of immobility, appears to be stationery.

the *kaula* Dharma declare that their law of being as Kaulas is to perceive in creation the *kula* as well as the *akula*, Shakti and Shiva, the dynamic and the static and conceive the Truth as the indistinguishable fusion of *kula-akula*, Shakti-Shiva. The votaries of the *samaya* tradition have as their highest purpose the meditation on the blissful harmonious union, *sāmarasya* of Shiva and Shakti in the thousand-petalled lotus centre in the head and taking their station there viewing the whole universe as the constant play of Shiva-Shakti. The true Tantric cannot conceive of Shiva alone or of Shakti alone. When he declares that before the creation starts, there is only the absolute pure effulgence *prakāśa*, he hastens to add that it has in an embryonic form the underlying *vimarśa*, *antar lina vimarśah.*[1] When in the stages of evolution Vimarsa, Nada, Parabindu etc. appear, each state is a fusion of Shiva and Shakti, only in varying degrees of concentration. If the dynamic aspect is apparent, it is called of the form of Shakti and if the static aspect is predominant, it is known as the form of Shiva. But all aspects contain both the static and the dynamic, Shiva and Shakti. The inseparable couple is described as conjoined like word and sense *vagarthāviva samprktau* by the foremost of poets. They are mutually the result of the energising of one on the other *paraspara tapassampat phalāyita parasparau,* says a later poet. The relationship is sought to be expressed in the figure of the Shakti standing on the breast or sitting on the lap of the Lord or as one body, the left side of

[1] *kāmakalā vilāsa* (*I*).

which has female features and the right side the male characteristics, *ardhanārīśvara*. Of course, these are all inadequate expressions of the marvellous relationship, the unique unity, because in this world of ours of name and form, two are required to make a union. But the union of Shiva-Shakti is the union of the one with itself to be realised by each one within himself. No words can express, no power can fathom this most intimate of all the intimate relationships.

And so, when Sri Chakra is conceived as the form-pattern of the Supreme Shakti, Shakti includes Shiva as well. The Tantra categorically declares that Sri Chakra is the one body of the Shiva couple, *śrīcakram śivayor vapuḥ* and proceeds to bring this spiritual living experience to the ken of normal understanding with a thoroughness, a logical approach and an eye for details which are the usual characteristics of the Tantra. Let us now illustrate.

Sri Chakra is known as Mātrikā Chakra as it represents the evolved form which are the alphabets in articulate speech, of the original Nada. The first letter of the alphabet *a*, the Tantra says, is the symbol of Shiva. When it is pronounced aspirated it becomes the last alphabet *ha* which is the symbol of Shakti. The first and last letter, *a* and *ha*, between them cover the whole of alphabets, embrace the entire gamut of the *śabda prapanca*.[1]

[1] अतोऽकारहकाराभ्यामहमित्यपृथक्तया ।
प्रपञ्चं शिवशक्तिभ्यां क्रोडीकृत्य प्रकाशते ।।

—*mātṛkācakrasambodha*.

The combination of the two letters *a* and *ha* resulting in the word *aham* is the epitome of the Matrikas and denotes the whole creation, because the whole creation comes into existence from a separation, a distinction between 'I' and 'This'. When the primordial *prakāśa* deliberated, the 'I' *aham* appeared on the scene and that is why *vimarśa* has been called as the first 'I', and acclaimed in *saundaryalahari* as *puramathitur āhopuruṣikā*. All the other 'I's *ahams* with which the universe teams are distortions of the original 'I'. The real 'I' behind the ego has to be found; as the Tantra cryptically puts it, the Guru should make one know the first and the last *ādim āntyam tu vedayét*, the real *aham*, which is the fusion, the one united form of Shiva-Shakti.[1] As Sri Chakra denotes the *mātṛkās* represented by *aham*, the Tantra concludes that Sri Chakra is the one body of the Shiva couple.

Again, in the Sri Chakra, the primary triangle, the eight-cornered figure, the two ten-edged figures and the fourteen pointed figure are known as Shakti Chakras while the figure of eight petals, sixteen petals, the three girdles and the three Bhupuras are known as Shiva Chakras. Thus with four Shiva Chakras and five Shakti Chakras, the nine Chakras are assembled to form Sri Chakra, the body of the

[1] "We must renew the secret bond in things,
Our hearts recall the lost divine Idea,
Reconstitute the perfect word, unite
The Alpha and the Omega in one sound;
Then shall the Spirit and Nature be at one."
—Sri Aurobindo: *Sāvitri* (1:4)

Shiva couple.[1] It is said that four Chakras are implied in the five Chakras—the three girdles in the triangle, the eight-petalled lotus in the eight-edged figure, the sixteen-petalled lotus in the two ten-cornered figures and the Bhupura in the fourteen-pointed figure,[2] thus emphasising the fact that Shakti includes Shiva.

Also, Sri Chakra is the configuration of nine triangles, five with apex downwards super-imposed upon four with apex upwards. The former five are the *śakti koṇas* while the latter are called *agni koṇas* or *śiva konas.* The dynamic Shakti is superimposed on the static Shiva indicating the spiritual truth that a perfect resignation and surrender to the Divine Will brings down the Divine Grace. The configuration of these Shiva and Shakti konas constitutes the body of the *navayoni* Chakra.

In the *brahmāṇḍa,* the five *śakti konas* originate the five elements, earth, air, fire, water and ether while the four *siva konas* produce the four principles *māyā, śuddha vidyā, maheśvara* and *sadāśiva.* These four in combination with the five elements produce the universes which are adumbrated in the design of the Sri Chakra. As the poet says: "His body is the dense sky; when she embraces it secretly their breath of love spreads a hidden beauty all around. Then dance in space the series of universes and

[1] चतुर्भिः शिवचक्रैश्च शक्तिचक्रैश्च पञ्चभिः ।
नवचक्रैश्च संसिद्धं श्रीचक्रं शिवयोर्वपुः ।।

[2] त्रिकोणे वैन्दवं श्लिष्टमष्टारेऽष्टदलाम्बुजम् ।
दशारयोः षोडशदलं भूपुरं भुवनात्मके ।। —*brahmāṇḍa purāna.*

glittering stars as though they are the beads of perspiration caused by their intense bliss of union."[1]

In the microcosm, *piṇḍāṇḍa*, the Shakti konas originate the five elements, skin, blood, flesh, fat and bone while the Shiva konas give birth to the four elements, marrow, semen, life and self.[2] In the *brahmāṇḍa*, the white Prakasa and the red Vimarsa, the white Shiva bindu and the red Shakti bindu have their incessant intermingling and play, while in the *pinḍānḍa*, the same delight is repeated in a much dimunitive form as the union of *śukla* and *śonita*, white and red, the seed and the ovum.

Sri Chakra which is verily the macrocosm as well as the microcosm is the body of the two in One, Shiva Shakti.

> "*This is the knot that ties together the stars:*
> *The two who are one are the secret of all power,*
> *The Two who are one are the might and*
> *right in things.*"[3]

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[1] Sri Kapali Sastriar: *āhnika stava.*

श्लिष्यन्ती गहनाम्बरं रहसि ते शक्तिः शरीरं विभो
प्रेमप्रश्वसितेन वां वितनुते सर्वत्र गूढां श्रियम् ।
सान्द्रानन्दकृता यथा वपुषि वां घर्माम्भसां मालिका
वैरिञ्चाण्डपरम्परा यत इयं ताराकृतिर्नृत्यति ।।

[2] त्वगसृङ्मांसमेदोऽस्थिधातवः शक्तिमूलकाः ।
मज्जाशुक्लप्राणजीवधातवः शिवमूलकाः ।।

[3] Sri Aurobindo: *Sāvitri* (1.4).

IX. THE DEITIES

"*The universal gods worship the dwarf seated in the middle.*"[1] —Katha Upanishad

"*The Supreme Effulgence of such a form stood out as the body of Sri Chakra surrounded by the swelling waves of her host of forces.*"[2]

—Nityashodasikarnava

"*O the one worshipped by the valorous, sixty four crores of Yoginis of great prowess have taken abode in this Chakra.*"[3] —Ibid.

"*Thus, this great Chakra is full of the great auspicious Tripuras.*"[4] —Ibid

The eternal couple Shiva-Shakti who are the warp and woof of the texture of existence are the first parents, both of men and of gods. All the gods and the goddesses are their offsprings who carry out their behest in the cosmic Plan.

The Sri Chakra which is the abode of the Supreme Goddess, the Divine Mother, is the residence as well of all her emanations, powers and personalities. Each one of them is distinct, has a definite function to perform and has a definite and distinct place in the heirarchy. Posited

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[1] मध्ये वामनमासीनं विश्वे देवा उपासते। —(2.5.3.)

[2] एवंरूपं परं तेजः श्रीचक्रवपुषा स्थितम्।
तदीयशक्तिनिकरस्फुरदूर्मिसमाकुलम्॥ —(6.55).

[3] चतुषष्टिर्यतः कोटचो योगिनीनां महौजसाम्।
चक्रमेतत् समाश्रित्य संस्थिता वीरवन्दिते॥ —(4.59).

[4] एवमेतन्महाचक्रं महाश्रीत्रिपुरामयम्। —(1.48).

in different planes in the rising tier of consciousness, in the pyramidal structure of the Meru, each one has its functioning in the particular sphere of Cosmic existence, is important in its own way and fulfills a purpose in the scheme of things. They all derive their strength, their very existence from the Divine Mother, carry out her behest and accomplish her work in the various spheres allotted to them. Radiating from her, they also converge to her. When the aspirant comes within their province of influence and action, their help is there for him to enlarge his existence progressively so that he may finally perceive the source from which they all have emanated.

We have said that when creation emerges from the creator, Sri Chakra also emerges as its transcript. At the same time, the various powers, personalities and emanations from the Supreme One also emerge and take their respective positions in the Cosmic field which is represented by Sri Chakra.

There are nine Chakras in the Sri Chakra, as we have already described. Proceeding from the outermost to the inner, they are Trailokya Mohana, Sarvasaparipuraka, Sarvasankshobhana, Sarvasaubhagyadayaka, Sarvarthasadhaka, Sarvarakshakara, Sarvarogahara, Sarvasiddhiprada, and Sarvanandamaya Chakras. Each Chakra has a colour of its own, a presiding deity, *cakreśvari* and a particular class of Yoginis belonging to it. Each Chakra also has its own *mudrā devatā.*

The Trailokyamohana Chakra consists of three lines, one inside the other which are white, red and yellow in colour. The Sarvasaparipuraka is white. The other chakras are all of different shades of red except the Sarvanandamaya (Bindu) which is beyond the colour scheme. The whole Chakra has emerged from the primary triangle and so the threefold division *tripura* is immanent in every Chakra. The presiding deities of the Chakras are all Tripuras, the triple principle in various stages of manifestation. Their names are respectively: Tripura, Tripureshwari, Tripurasundari, Tripuravasini, Tripurashri, Tripuramalini, Tripurasiddhi, Tripurambika and Mahatripurasundari. The Yoginis are sixtyfour crores in number. They are in groups and are yoked to the Divine Mother in their particular aspects. Each Chakra has its own group. They are respectively *prakaṭa*, patent, *gupta* hidden, *guptatara* more hidden, *sampradāya* concealed by tradition, *kulottirṇa* inaccessible to the senses, *nigarbha* embryonic, *rahasya* secret, *atirahasya* exceedingly secret and *parāpararahasya* secret beyond all secrets. The workings of the Yoginis are patent only in the outermost periphery. Their functions become more and more unfathomable and their secrets thicker and thicker as one proceeds to delve deep into the mysteries.

Now, we come to the *mudrā devatās*. "It is not enough that there be devotion and an attitude of surrender to the Deity within oneself, in the heart and the mind. It is a significant part of worship to express it bodily also; for the body too is a partici-

pant in the sadhana. For this purpose there are a number of gestures by movements of the limbs of the body, *mudras*, as they are termed. These external movements of the physical body, with hands and fingers, emphasize and affirm the intention in the heart and mind of the worshipper and by constant repetition establish the idea in the very physical matter of the body. The Mudras are the language in which the body speaks to the Deity."[1] And each Mudra is charged with the influence of its deity, Mudra Devata. The nine Mudras for the nine chakras of Sri Chakra are respectively *sarvasankṣobhiṇi* the agitator of all, *sarvavidrāviṇi* the chaser of all, *sarvākarṣiṇi* the attracter of all, *sarvavaśankari* the subjugator of all, *sarvonmādini* the intoxicator of all, *sarvamahānkuśā* the great goader of all, *khecari* the mover in space, *sarvabījā* the seed of all and *yoni* the source (ovum). It is said that the Yoni mudra is the most important of all Mudras as it is the Mudra of the *bindusthāna,* affording full scope for the acquisition of the Perfect Light.[2] There is a tenth Mudra which is known as *trikhaṇḍa* the three fragments which is applicable to the whole of Sri Chakra. This Mudra of threefold division is said to pervade the entire Sri Chakra.[3] Now we shall proceed to enumerate the deities in each Chakra.

[1] Sri M. P. Pandit: *Light on the Tantra.*

[2] सम्पूर्णस्य प्रकाशस्य लाभभूमिरियं पुनः।
योनिरूपा कलारूपा सर्वानन्दमये स्थिता ॥

[3] सर्वस्य चक्रराजस्य व्यापिका परिकीर्तिता।

—(1.71)

trailokyamohana

This is known as Bhupura, a square of three lines, the lines one inside the other. In the outermost line are posited the Siddhis: *aṇimā* minuteness, *laghimā* lightness, *mahimā* greatness, *iśitva* lordship, *vaśitva* control, *prākāmya* to have whatever one wants, *bhukti* enjoyment, *icchā* desire, *prāpti* attainment and *sarvakāmasiddhi* the accomplishment of all desires. These are the Siddhis one aspires to get as the culmination in different lines of worship; but in this worship of the Divine Mother, these are the beginnings as the Siddhis are in the outermost periphery. Where other worships end, this worship begins. That is why the Tantra forces the point dramatically in these lines:

> "Either one should be in his last birth or else one should be Shiva himself. Then only can he get the fifteen-lettered Mantra of the Divine Mother."[1]

In the middle line are situated the seven Mothers and their collective entity; Brahmi, Maheswari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Mahendri, Chamunda and Mahalakshmi.[2] They are the emanations from Brahma, Shiva etc. who are again

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[1] यस्य नो पश्चिमं जन्म यदि वा शङ्करः स्वयम् ।
तेनैव लभ्यते विद्या श्रीमत्पञ्चदशाक्षरी ।।

—*brahmāṇḍa purāṇa*

[2] Their consorts are the eight Bhairavas.
asitānga, ruru, caṇḍa, krodha, unmatta, kapāla bhiṣaṇa, samhāra.

the portions of the Divine Mother. They are just like their originals in form, ornaments and vehicles *yadvadeva hi yat rūpam yathā bhūṣaṇa-vāhanam tadvadeva hi tat śaktih.*

In the innermost line are the ten Mudra Devatas already mentioned.

sarvāśāparipūraka

This consists of sixteen petals in which are situated the deities of attraction related to desire, intellect, ego, sound, touch, form, taste, smell, mind, fortitude, memory, name, seed, soul, immortality and the body. They are *kāmākarṣini, buddhyākarṣiṇi, ahankārākarṣiṇi, śabdākarṣiṇi, sparśākarṣiṇi, rupākarṣiṇi, rasākarṣiṇi, gandhākarṣiṇi, cittākarṣiṇi, dhairyākarṣiṇi, smṛtyākarṣiṇi, nāmākarṣiṇi, bijākarṣiṇi, atmākarsini, amṛtākarṣiṇi* and *śarirākarṣiṇi*

sarvasankṣobhaṇa

In this Chakra there are eight petals and the forces which operate not merely by the aid of the parts of the physical body, *ananga*, the faculties which require the coordination of the mind are mentioned as the presiding deities. They are *anangakusumā, anangamekhalā, anangamadanā, anangamadanāturā, anangarekhā, anangavegini, anangānkuśā* and *anangamālini.*

sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka

In this Chakra of fourteen corners are situated the fourteen deities: *sarvasankṣobhiṇi* the agitator of all *sarvavidrāviṇi* the chaser of all, *sarvākarṣiṇi*

the attracter of all, *sarvāhlādini* the delighter of all, *sarvasammohini* the deluder of all, *sarvastambhini* the arrester of all, *sarvajṛmbhiṇi* the releaser of all, *sarvavaśankari* the controller of all, *sarvaranjani* pleasing to all, *sarvonmādini* the intoxicator of all, *sarvārthasādhani* the accomplisher of all objects, *sarvasampattipūraṇi* the fulfiller of all opulences, *sarvamantramayi* one made up of all Mantras and *sarvadvandva kṣayankari* the destroyer of all dualities·

sarvārthasādhaka

In this Chakra which is known as the outer ten-cornered figure are the deities of auspiciousness. They are *sarvasiddhipradā* the giver of all accomplishments, *sarvasampatpradā* the giver of all riches, *sarvapriyamkari* the doer of what is liked by all, *sarvamangalakāriṇī* the one who brings about all auspiciousness, *sarvakāmapradā* the giver of all desires, *sarvaduhkhavimocani* the remover of all sufferıngs, *sarvamṛtyupraśamani* the appeaser of all portents of death, *sarvavighnanivārini* the overcomer of all obstacles, *sarvāngasundari* beautiful in all limbs and *sarvasaubhāgyadāyini*, the giver of all good fortunes.

sarvarakṣākara

This is the inner ten-cornered figure which is presided over by the powers of protection. *sarvajnā* Omniscient, *sarvaśakti* omnipotent *sarvaiśvaryapradā* granter of all sovereignties, *sarvajnānamayī* full of all knowledge, *sarvavyādhi vināśini* destroyer of all diseases, *sarvādhāra svarupā* one in the form of all supports, *sarvapāpaharā* dispeller of

all evils, *sarvānandamayi* full of all bliss, *sarvarakṣā-svarūpiṇi* one in the form of all protections and *saṛvepsitaphalapradā* the giver of the fruit of all wants.

sarvarogahara

This is the Chakra eight-edged which is presided over by the deities of Speech, Vagdevis. They are in the inner circle and are near and dear to the Divine Mother. They are the seers of the thousand occult names of the Great Mother, *lalitā sahasranāma* and they are praised by the great goddess Lalita herself as "the knowers of the secret of my Chakra", *mat cakrasya rahasya-jnāḥ*. They are situated just round the great Vagbhava, the primary triangle and their names are *vaśini*, *kāmeśi*, *modini*, *vimalā*, *aruṇā*, *jayini*, *sarveśi* and *kaulini*

sarvasiddhiprada

In the space between the eight-edged figure and the inverted triangle are situated the *āyudha devatās*, the deities presiding over the weapons of the Divine Mother. The weapons are *pāśa* noose, *ankuśa* goad, *ikṣukodaṇḍa* the sugar-cane bow and *bāṇa* the five arrows of flower. The noose and the goad represent the power of attraction and repulsion, love and hate, passion and anger. The bow denotes the mind and the five arrows denote the five *tanmātras* sound, touch etc. In the triangle which is the *sarvasiddhiprada cakra* are situated the Trinity, *kāmeśvari*, *vajreśvari* and *bhaga-mālini*.

sarvānandamaya

In Bindu which is full of Bliss, in the innermost precinct in the *sanctum sanctorum* is Lalita the Supreme. Of course, she is there one with her Lord Kameshwara

"the deathless Two-in-One,
A single being in two bodies clasped,
A diarchy of two united souls,
Seated absorbed in deep creative joy;
Their trance of bliss sustained the
mobile world"[1]

[1] Sri Aurobindo: *sāvitri* (2.14).

X. SRI CHAKRA AND THE MANTRA

"*As the unborn, he has held the wide earth; he has up-pillared heaven with his Mantras of Truth.*"[1]

—Rig Veda

"*She is the form of Sabda-Brahman.*
Through her is invoked the one beyond the Sabda."[2]

—Jnanarnava.

When the Transcendent Brahman desires to manifest out of its own volition, there is a throb, a stir which immediately starts a series of vibrations. These take the form of sound, *nāda*, which is the precursor of the creation of objects. *artha sṛṣṭeḥ purvam śabda sṛṣṭiḥ*. The lines of rhythm that emerge out, proceed to form the luminous patterns which are known as Chakras, while the Nada that is received in the audition of the seers is transmitted in the human tongue as Mantras. The Mantra of a deity and its Chakra have a very close correspondence as the purpose of both the Mantra and the Chakra is to manifest the Deity which they enshrine. The Mantra is not a means to contact the Deity; it is the Deity itself. It is the sound-body of the Deity having a remarkable correlation with the body of the Deity that is usually contemplated in Dhyana. The five-faced Shiva has a five-lettered Mantra *pancākṣari* while the Mantra of six letters *śaravaṇabhava* is for manifesting the six-faced Subrahmanya. The body of Tripurasundari, it is

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[1] अजो न क्षां दाधार पृथिवीं तस्तम्भ द्यां मन्त्रेभिः सत्यैः ।
— (RV 1.67.3).

[2] शब्दब्रह्मस्वरूपेयं शब्दातीतं तु जप्यते ।
(1.9).

said, is composed of the three *kūṭas* of the Mantra, *mūlakūṭatrayakalevarā*. Similarly, the Chakra is not a means to worship the deity, but should be conceived as the Deity itself embodied in its sound-form, the Mantra. In the case of Sri Chakra, the Tantric texts give elaborate and systematic explanations to arrive at the conclusion that Sri Chakra and the Mantra of the Divine Mother are one and the same. It is true that different explanations are offered. But they do not in the least vitiate the ultimate conclusion arrived at. Rather, they illustrate the varied wealth of direct perception and intuitive reasoning of the Tantric seers bringing home the fact that there are more ways than one to arrive at the Truth.

In articulate speech, it is common knowledge that the alphabets build the language. They create the words; they are the little mothers, *mātṛkās* who give birth to all that is written and spoken. The great Divine Mother, infinite, immutable is in the form of Sabda-Brahman and gives birth to all the gods and the goddesses. In this world of name and form, she continues her function through her emanations, the little mothers *mātṛkās*, the Supernal Sabda-Brahman form of hers precipitating here in the world of language as alphabets. That is why the letters of the alphabet are known as *akṣaras* as they share the immutability of the Sabda-Brahman from where they have emanated. Thus the *mātṛkākṣaras* not only represent the form of the Divine Mother but also act as a repository of all the

Mantras of gods and goddesses even as the Divine Mother bears and sustains in her womb all the forms of gods and goddesses. The seed-sound or the seed-sounds which symbolise the form of any god or goddess have to be fashioned out of the alphabets; as such it is said that the *mātṛkās* are the basis of all Mantras.[1]

The initial throb at the beginning of creation assumes a double poise Shiva and Shakti whose union results in the manifestation of the universe. The alphabets also have a double principle, the mingling of which produces the expressive language. The *jnānārṇava tantra* clearly states that the sixteen vowels in the Sanskrit tongue are the form of Shakti while the letters beginning with *ka* and ending with *kṣa* are the form of Shiva.[2] The consonants cannot be articulated by themselves unless they are in consonance with the voewls. The vowels in the form of Shakti give force, energy and power to the consonants in the form of Shiva, which would have otherwise been dead letters, *śava*, incapable of being articulated.[3] Thus, the

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[1] It is a secret of Mantra Sadhana. Siddhi in any Mantra, whatever may be the deity, can be hastened if the Mantra is taken up for japa after performing the *mātṛkā nyāsa*.

[2] कलामण्डलमाख्यातं शक्तिरूपं महेश्वरी ।
ककारादिक्षकारान्ता वर्णास्तु शिवरूपिण: ।।

[3] In the Tamil language which can claim great antiquity, the letters are known as *ezhuthu*, those that have risen up or waken up. The vowels are called *uyir*, life, while the consonants are known as *may*, the body.

mātṛkās which are the basis of all Mantras represent the unified form of Shiva and Shakti. Sri Chakra being the unified form of Shiva and Shakti, is not different from the *mātṛkās* and it forms the basis of all other Chakras. Sri Chakra for this reason is known as Mātṛkā Chakra and when it is so identified it is called *kailāsa prastāra*. It is the abode of all sound-formations. Even if an aspirant remembers in his mind a name of the Divine Mother immediately the consciousness packed up in the name is contacted and the Sabda-Saktis posited in the Sri Chakra, the circle of little Mothers come to know of the fact.[1] They take care of the aspirant and do whatever is needed on the occasion.

We have stated earlier that the primary triangle in the Srı Chakra is known as *vāgbhava* born out of *vāk*, the Word. As Srı Chakra ıs only an amplification and extension of the primary triangle, the whole Sri Chakra can be said to be born out of the Word. In this way the Tantrics set out to establish the identity of Sri Chakra with the Primal Word or Logos.

They also take up for consideration the particular Mantra-form of the Divine Mother. This Mantra is the great *śri vidyā* generally expressed as a Mantra of fifteen letters *pancadaśi*. There are three *kūṭas*, peaks, in the Mantra ascribed to the moon, sun and fire and they form the sound-

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[1] मनसा संस्मरन्यस्या यदि नामाऽपि साधकः ।
तदैव मातृकाचक्रे विदितो भवति प्रिये ॥
— *nityáṣoḍaṣikárṇava* (4.55)

body of Tripurasundari.[1] The Sri Chakra also, like the Sri Vidya, has three parts, the *samhāra* Chakra consisting of the *bindu*, *trikoṇa* and *aṣṭa koṇa*, the *sthiti* Chakra composed of the two *daśāras* and the *caturdaśa koṇa*, and the *sṛṣṭi* Chakra forming the eight-petalled lotus, the sixteen-petalled lotus and the *bhūpura*. The three *kūṭas* of the Mantra correspond to these three Chakras of Dissolution, Maintenance and Creation and thus the whole Mantra is identified with Sri Chakra.[2]

Again, the Panchadasi Mantra not merely connotes the Divine Mother Kameshwari but denotes the united form of both Kameshwara and Kameshwari. In the Mantra, there occur three '*ka*'*s* and two '*ha*'*s* which are said to be Shiva's portion while the other letters belong to Shakti. However, the three *hrims* crowning each *kūṭa* are of the form of both Shiva and Shakti, *ubhayātmakah*.[3] Thus, if Panchadasi is the united sound-body of Shiva and Shakti, it cannot be different from Sri Chakra which is the one embodiment of Shiva and Shakti.

The *jnānārṇava tantra* gives a very interesting concordance leading to the identity of Panchadasi and Sri Chakra. The Tantra points out that the fifteen-lettered Panchadasi can be reduced to nine letters, by leaving out the letters that are repeated.

[1] मूलकूटत्रयकलेबरा । —*lālitā sahasranāma.*

[2] त्रिखण्डं मातृकाचक्रं सोमसूर्यानलात्मकम् ।

[3] कत्रयं हद्वयं चैव शैवो भागः प्रकीर्तितः ।
शक्त्यक्षराणि शेषाणि ह्रींकार उभयात्मकः ।।

These nine letters *navārṇa* are known as *meru*. The Sri Chakra also is of the form of *meru*.[1] This great Meru represents the global formations of *brahmāṇḍa*.[2] The nine letters are *la, sa, ha, i,è, ra, ka, ardha candra* and *bindu*. These letters are enough to form the fifteen letters of the Panchadasi Mantra if we bear in mind that the seed-sound *hrim* is formed by combining the letters *ha, ra, i, ardha candra* and *bindu*. If these seed-sounds are expressed in the conventional code of the Tantrics, the letters *la, sa, ha, i, è, ra* and *ka* will be denoted by the earth, the moon, Shiva, Maya, Shakti, Fire and *madana*,[3] The letter *la* denoting the earth indicates in the Sri Chakra, the earth-stretch *bhūpura*, the boundary of three lines with four portals. The letter *sa* denoting the moon represents his sixteen *kalās* and so correspond to the sixteen-petalled lotus in the Sri Chakra. The letter *ha* which is Shiva, Ashtamurti, connotes the eight-petalled lotus in the Sri Chakra. The letter *i* is Maya, the Sovereign of the worlds, Bhuvaneshwari, who encompasses in her sweep the higher seven and the lower seven worlds and thus denoting the *caturdaśa kona* in the Sri Chakra. *é* is Shakti, the force of the protector Vishnu whose ten descents *daśa avatāra* make the Shakti tenfold as the outer *daśāra* Chakra. The letter *ra* is Fire with his famous ten *kalās* which go

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[1] एभिर्नवात्मकैर्वर्णैः जायते त्रिपुरामनुः ।
श्रीचक्रमपि देवेशि मेरुरूपं न संशयः ।।

[2] नवाक्षरो महामेरुरयं ब्रह्माण्डगोलकः ।

[3] भूमिश्चन्द्रः शिवो माया शक्तिः कृष्णाध्वमादनौ ।
अर्धचन्द्रश्च बिन्दुश्च नवार्णो मेरुरुच्यते ।।

to make the inner *daśāra* Chakra. The letter *ka* is Madana, that is Kameshwara, with his eight forms *aṣṭa mūrti* which transcribe themselves as the *aṣṭa koṇa*. The *ardha candra* by its very form resembles the primary triangle while the letter *bindu* goes to form the *bindu sthāna* of the Sri Chakra. Thus, Sri Chakra is the product of the letters of Sri Vidya Mantra, concludes the Tantra.[1]

Bhaskararaya in his *varivasyā rahasya* mentions the identity differently. According to him, the *bindu* is formed by the letter *i* and the three '*ka*'*s* in the Mantra, the primary triangle and the *aṣṭa koṇa* are both formed by the three *hrims*, the two *daśāras* and the *caturdaśa koṇaś* are from two '*ha*'s and the letter *é*, the two lotuses of eight and sixteen petals from the two '*sa*'s and the *bhūpura* with four portals from the three '*la*'s of the Mantra.[2]

Lakshmidhara in his commentary on *soundarya lahari* explains the identity of Sri Chakra and the Mantra quite differently. He is aware of different approaches as he himself quotes two schools of thought, *subhagodaya mata* and *pūrṇodaya mata*.

All these go to show the importance the Tantric Masters attach to the conception of identity of Sri Chakra with Sri Vidya, as without such an identity the worship of Sri Chakra will only be a lifeless ritual.

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[1] श्रीचक्रं तु वरारोहे श्रीविद्यावर्णसंभवम्।

[2] कत्रितयादीकाराद्बिन्दुर्जातः तदग्रिमे चक्रे।
हृल्लेखाभिस्तत्परचक्रत्रितयं हकाराभ्याम्॥
एकारेण च तत्परचक्रे जाते सकाराभ्याम्।
चतुरश्राणि लकारैरेवं विद्याक्षरेण चक्रजनिः॥

XI. SRI CHAKRA AND THE GURU

"*Our fathers by their words, broke the strong and stubborn places, the Angiras seers shattered the mountain rock with their cry........*"[1]

—Rig Veda.

"*The Intelligent one should proclaim the Master but carefully conceal his counsel*"[2]

—Kularnava.

"*The Master, looking with his eyes into the eyes of the disciple, brings out by the glory of his Yoga through his eyes, his consciousness from his body and himself entering through the disciple's eyes in the form of that consciousness pierces the mind of the disciple.*"[3]

—Bhaskararaya.

Guru, Devata and Mantra are identical and there is absolutely no difference between them, declares the Tantra. As Mantra is the sound-body of the Godhead, the Yantra or Chakra is the form-pattern through which the Godhead is delineated in this universe of name and form. The Chakra and the Deity are identical and so are the Chakra and the Guru.

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[1] वीळु चिद् दृळहा पितरो न उक्थैरद्रिं रुजन् अङ्गिरसो रवेण।

—(1.71.2)

[2] गुरुं प्रकाशयेद् धीमान् मन्त्रं यन्त्रेन गोपयेत् ।।

[3] श्रीगुरुः शिष्यदृष्टयन्तः स्वदृष्टया पश्यन्
योगमहिम्ना स्वतनोः सकाशात् स्वचैतन्यं
स्वनेत्रद्वारा बहिर्निष्कास्य शिष्यनेत्रद्वारा
तच्चैतन्यरूपः स्वयं शिष्यस्य मनो वेधयेत् ।।

— Setubandha

In fact, for the disciple the Guru is the delegated power of the Godhead on earth and whatever has to come to the disciple from the Godhead flows through the Guru. The Guru often comes in a human form, but to mistake him to be merely a human being is a sure way to spiritual disaster. For the true and sincere disciple, the Guru is God himself. For, in the ultimate analysis, he is "the inner Guide, the World-Teacher, *jagad guru*, secret within us. It is he who destroys our darkness by the resplendent light of his knowledge; that becomes within us the increasing glory of his own self-revelation. He discloses progressively in us his own nature of freedom, bliss, love, power, immortal being. He sets above us his divine example as our ideal and transforms the lower existence into a reflection of that which it contemplates. By the inpouring of his own influence and presence into us, he enables the individual being to attain to identity with the universal and transcendent."[1]

The transcendent Brahman is the Primordial Guru, *ādi nātha*. "He, the ever Blissful, of his own accord, took the role of master and disciple and by statements made of questions and answers brought down *samavatārayat* the Tantra" affirms the scripture.[2] The word '*samavatārayat*' "brought down" is full of significance. The Tantras are

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[1] Sri Aurobindo. Synthesis of Yoga.

[2] गुरुशिष्यपदे स्थित्वा स्वयमेव सदाशिवः ।
प्रश्नोत्तरपदैर्वाक्यैः तन्त्रं समवतारयत् ।।

— *svacchanda tantra*

known as *āgamas*, the truths that have come down. The writers of the Tantras rarely hold themselves as their authors. They give expression to the knowledge brought down from *ādi nātha*. It is the eternal Veda-secret, consciousness-knowledge, that is hidden in the Supernal Akāśa, *parama vyoma*, which is brought down, transmitted to the limited human intelligence. In certain Tantras, Shiva is the disciple and Shakti the Guru, and in certain others, Shakti is the disciple and Shiva the Master. In both the cases, the *ādi nātha* has in him the dual forms of Shiva and Shakti. In Sadhana, the Guru who comes in the heirarchy of *ādi nātha* has to be meditated upon by the disciple as an embodiment of the unified form of Shiva and Shakti. The essential light, *prakāśa* form that is Shiva and the discernment *vimarśa* form that is Shakti both mingle and harmonise in the form of the Guru.[1] The white light of Shiva and the red light of Shakti merge in the vast effulgence of the triad, of the triple manifestation beyond the ken of mind and speech, which is verily the lotus feet of the Guru.[2] Thus, we see that the Guru is the embodiment of the Shiva couple. Sri Chakra too, we have explained. is the body of the Shiva couple *sri cakram śivayor vapuḥ*. So, it follows that the Sri Chakra and Guru are one and the same.

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[1] स्वप्रकाशशिवमूर्तिरेकिका तद्विमर्शतनुरेकिका तयोः ।
सामरस्यवपुरिष्यते परा पादुका परशिवात्मनो गुरोः ।।

—*cidvilāsa*

[2] वन्दे गुरुपदद्वन्द्वमवाङ्मनसगोचरम् ।
रक्तशुक्लप्रभामिश्रमतर्क्यं त्रैपुरं महः ।।

Sri Chakra represents the pattern of creation, the rays that are transmitted from the Great Radiance. We have said that the feet of the Guru embody the vast effulgence of the triad and its radiation is the *guru maṇḍala.* As Sri Kapali Sastriar says, "Just as there is the existence of the Lord of beings concealed in the beings, likewise the transmission of the father in the sons or the master in the disciples.[1] The Lord of beings is the One immutable, the Infinite. He experiences the joy of existence by becoming Many, by limiting himself in mutable finite forms. We can say that God finds himself in Man. Similarly, the father becomes the son, who is none other than his own extension *santati.* This innate urge to see himself perpetuated in the son, man has inherited from his Creator whose innate urge to perpetuate Himself resulted in the creation. The *samsāra cakra* whirls on unchanging sharing the immortality of its Creator, though its constituents suffer mutability through the cycle of life and death. Likewise, in the realm of the Spirit, the disciple who owes his spiritual birth to the Guru is his extension, *vidyā santāna.* The torch of eternal knowledge that is transmitted from hand to hand, or as the Tantra would put it, *karṇāt karṇopadeśena,* in this relay race of life goes on shedding its light and this process knows no break. To this perpetual heirarchy, continuous guidance, the Tantra gives the name *augha,* which

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[1] तिरोभूतस्य भूतेषु भूतेशस्य भवो यथा।
पितुः पुत्रेषु शिष्येषु गुरोर्वा सङ्क्रमस्तथा॥

—*āhnika stava.*

means flood or current. It is the flood of truth and knowledge, constantly on the move washing away all falsehood and ignorance. It sustains and cherishes the aspirant with its divine waters *āpo devīh*. Any true aspirant cannot help being caught in this flood. In spiritual Sadhana, the Tantra affirms, the sadhaka need not go in search of the Guru. If his aspiration is sincere and true, he gets caught in this flood of Great Guidance. In other words, when the disciple is ready, the Guide comes on the scene and ferries him from the shore of darkness to that of light.

The *aughas* are three in number, *divyaugha*, *siddhaugha* and *mānavaugha*. The *divyaugha* are the Divine guides who watch over the destiny of the human race with constant vigilance and unbounded compassion. The *siddaugha* are the Accomplished or Perfected ones, the semi-divine Guides, who by their dint of effort have become Siddhas and thus competent to guide others. Puranic figures like Sanaka and Narada come under this category. The *mānavaugha* are the human Guides like Durvasa and Agastya, who are near and ready to assist the struggling humanity. The eternal Teacher, the Primordial Guru, *ādi nātha*, has in him all the knowledge he has to transmit in the seed-form. He holds in himself concentrated, in a potential form, all knowledge and consciousness. He is stationed in the *bindu*, in the seed, full of the creative power. When he wants to radiate out of himself, when he desires to break the bunds of his self-contained ocean of knowledge and flood the universe, he

becomes Shiva and Shakti, the three *bindus* forming the primary triangle. The three couples, *mitreśanātha kāmeśvari*, *uḍḍīśanātha vajreśvari* and *ṣaṣṭīśanātha bhagamālini* form the three sides of the triangle and from them starts the Guru Mandala. the three *aughas*, *divya*, *siddha* and *mānava*.[1] That is why the Light of the Guru is said to be *traipuram mahaḥ*, the vast effulgence of *tripurā*, the primary triangle as the three *aughas* are situated there.

The Tantrik Sadhaka always pays obeisance to his Guru, *parama guru*, the Guru of his Guru and *parameṣṭhi guru*, the Guru of his *parama guru*. This threefold categorisation applies to each of the three *aughas* as well. And so, we arrive at the ninefold classification of the Guru Mandala, the *nava nāthas*. This classification closely corresponds to the ninefold classification of Sri Chakra, thus proving once again that the Guru and Sri Chakra are one and the same.

The Guru is the true father of the disciple, as he bears him in his womb during the period of initiation and delivers him unto the Godhead. Initiation is a second birth to the disciple and thereafter it is the spiritual birth alone that matters to the disciple. His earthly father gave him a physical body no doubt; but it is the spiritual father who creates for him a body capable of receiving into itself the Divine. The *bhāvanopaniṣad* declares that the Guru as the *nava nāthas*, nine masters,

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[1] Kamakala Vilasa—Sloka 39.

create for the disciple the body with nine apertures, *tena navarandhrarūpo dehaḥ*. The masters are equated with apertures because through these sensory openings only, one has to receive the Divine's flow and afterwards they become the divine doors *dvāro devīh* swinging open into the vastness. It is said that the *divyaugha* fashions the two ears and the mouth, the *siddhaugha* the two eyes and the genital, and the *mānavaugha* the two nostrils and the anus. Thus, the nine Masters are connected with the body with nine apertures, which are in turn identified with the nine Chakras of the Sri Chakra.

Before closing, we would like to point out a striking parallel between the *nava nāthas* of the Tantric tradition and the Angirasa Rishis of the Vedic wisdom. These Rishis are sons of the Flame, *agni*, the Seer-Will just as the *nāthas* are the offsprings of the essential Light, *prakāśa*. The divine, semi-divine and human nature of the Tantric Masters is also shared by the Vedic seers. For "the Angirasas are at once the divine seers who assist in the cosmic and human workings of the Gods and their earthly representatives, the ancient fathers who first found the wisdom of which the Vedic hymns are a chant and memory and renewal in experience. They are also seers of the truth, finders and speakers of the word of the Truth and by the power of the Truth they win for us the wide world of Light and Immortality which is described in the Veda as the Vast, the True, the Light and as the own home of this Flame of which they are the

children."[1] Just like the Tantric Masters who are ever ready to help the struggling aspirant by giving him the Mantra, by making him conscious in the heart-centre by helping him to manifest his latent capacities and by lifting the veil that separates the disciple from the deity, "the Angirasas are waiting still and always, ready to chant the word, to rend the cavern, to find the lost herds, to recover the hidden Sun".[2] The *nāthas* are nine in number and the Angirasas are Navagwas possessors of nine cows, the nine rays of illumination. The Angirasas when joined with the Seer Ayasya become ten, *daśagwas*, while the *nava nāthas* joined with the *ādi nātha* also become ten.

The concept of Guru Mandala illustrates how the Vedic wisdom is enshrined in the Tantric tradition.

[1] Sri Aurobindo: *On the Veda.*
[2] Sri Aurobindo: *On the Veda.*

XII. SRI CHAKRA AND THE HUMAN BODY

"*The Auspicious let us hear with our ears, the Auspicious let us see with our eyes; Oh Objects of our worship! with firm limbs and bodies let us laud you and enjoy the term of life allotted by the Gods.*"[1]—Rig Veda

"*Realise in us the microcosm Thy form of macrocosm. Make me know again.*"[2] —Arunopanishad

"*The undivine would not adore the divine.*"[3]

—Tantra

"It is necessary to remember the fundamental principle of the Tantra Shāstrā that man is a microcosm (*kṣudra–brahmāṇḍa*). Whatever ever exists in the outer universe exists in him. All the Tattwas and the worlds are within him and so are the supreme Shiva–Shakti.

The body may be divided into two main parts, namely, the head and trunk on one hand, and the legs on the other. In man, the centre of the body is between these two, at the base of the spine where the legs begin. Supporting the trunk and throughout the whole body there is the spinal cord. This is the axis of the body, just as Mount Meru is the axis of the Earth. Hence man's spine is called Meru-danda, the Meru or axis-staff."[4]

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[1] भद्रं कर्णेभिः श्रृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्य्यंजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तस्थिवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ।। —RV.I.89.8

[2] आण्डी भव ज मा मुहुः । —(I.6)

[3] नादेवो देवमर्चयेत् ।

[4] Sir John Woodroffe: *Sakti and Sakta:*

And the Sri Chakra, we know, is represented in the form of Meru. Is this enough evidence to deduce that there is no differentiation existing between the Sri Chakra and the human body? Or shall we say that the human body encases a spark of the Divine as its living soul and Sri Chakra being a radiation from the Divine in the form of light, both Sri Chakra and the human body are one and the same?

In that case, we would not have appreciated the differences in manifestation of the One as the Many; neither would we have attached importance to the purposive projections or particular tvalues intended in these manifold creations. In the words of Sri Kapali Sastriar: "This means we are thinking of man as a human soul, rightly so, but overlook the vehicle or vehicles of the soul. For these are the embodiments, gross or subtle, in which the human spirit finds its own manifestation . . . . The affirmation of the essential spirit—here the human soul—is achieved by negativing or ignoring the parts and therefore nullifying their values. In such a view the only purpose of these embodiments and instruments or vehicles is the soul's realisation of the Self or the Divine and there is no more use for them or nothing more possible for realisation in them. But the truth about man in this our view is not so simple, nor is it nothing but a spiritual spark, discovering its source in God or Supreme Spirit or Self. Man has many parts in him, some are rudimentary, some developed, but all of them have a right to find their proper place

in the state of the soul's higher achievement. The Vedic Rishis often speak of portions, *bhāga*, which are the shares of the Gods offered by man who receives in the various members of his being the gifts of the Gods bestowed upon him in return for his offerings in the sacrificial worship. It is the vision of the Vedic mystics and therefore their doctrine that the Gods are Cosmic Powers of the Supreme Godhead who in their respective spheres function in the universe as Nature-powers as well as in the inner existence as psychological and spiritual forces at work in the human being. And man is not the soul alone but includes the powers of the soul, the mind in its various gradations, the life-powers in all spheres of their action, the material body by no means to be excluded from the Divine Scheme of human existence. The Rishis uphold the claim of every part of the human being to receive its share of the gifts of the Gods because every part is offered to them as rightly belonging to the universal Powers of the Godhead and the physical body is always taken into account."[1]

Following the trail of the Vedic Seers, *bhāvanopaniṣad*, which is one of the important Shakta Upanishads, describes a way of meditation *bhāvanā* in which due importance is given to the material body, the mind in its gradations and the life-powers in various fields of action and their identity established with the corresponding Powers or Shaktis

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[1] *Lights on teachings:* The Mystic Quartette and the Human Synthesis. (Collected Works of T. V. Kapali Sastry Vol. Two: The Book of Lights—2)

located in the various parts of Sri Chakra. The method of arriving at the identity is by offering these members of the human body to the Shaktis to whom they originally belonged, to the universal Powers located in the Sri Chakra. This has to be achieved by *bhāvanā*, deep meditation contemplating step by step the various psycho-physical parts in the human body and the corresponding powers in the Sri Chakra and dwelling on their identity. To aid meditation, a powerful outward ritual in the form of *nyāsa* has been devised by Bhaskararaya. which is famous amongst the worshippers as *bhāvanopaniṣad prayoga vidhi*. We shall now deal with the relevant portions.[1]

The meditation starts from the outmost Chakra of Sri Chakra. In the first line of the Bhupura are situated the Siddhis: *aṇimā* minuteness, *laghimā* lightness, *mahimā* greatness, *īśitva* lordship, *vaśitva* control, *prākāmya* power to have whatever one wants, *bhukti* enjoyment, *icchā* desire, *prāpti* attainment and *sarva kāma siddhi* the accomplishment of all desires. These are in the human complex, natural state, and the nine sentiments *sṛngāra* erotism, *virya* heroism, *karuṇā* compassion, *adbhuta* wonder, *hāsya* humour, *bhayānaka* terror, *bibhatsa* disgust, *raudra* wrath and *śānta* quiescence.[2]

kāma lust, *krodha* anger, *lobha* covetousness,

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[1] For a full understanding, the reader is referred to "Bhāvanopaniṣad with commentary of Bhaskararaya"–English rendering by Dr. S. Mira (Ganesh & Co. Madras).

[2] नियतिश्शृङ्गारादयो रसा अणिमादिसिद्धयः ।

moha delusion, *mada* pride, *mātsarya* envy *puṇya* merit and *pāpa* demerit are the eight Shaktis in the second line of the Bhupura, Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Mahendri, Chamunda, and Mahalakshmi.[1]

The six centres in the body, Muladhara, Swadhistana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddhi, Ajna, the two Sahasraras one above and the other below and *indrayoni* are the nine *mudrā śaktis* situated in the third line of the Bhupura.[2]

The five elements, earth, water, fire, air, ether, the ten senses, ear, skin, eye, tongue, nose, mouth, foot, hand, anus, genital and the changing mind are the sixteen Powers of attraction Kamakarshini etc. in the sixteen-petalled-lotus.[3]

The faculties of speaking, taking, going, excreting, enjoying, rejecting, accepting and ignoring are the eight Powers, Ananga Kusuma etc. in the eight-petalled lotus.[4]

The fourteen Nadis,[5] Alambusa, Kuhuh, Visvodara, Varuni, Hastijihva, Yasovati, Payasvini,

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[1] कामक्रोधलोभमोहमदमात्सर्यपुण्यपापमया ब्राह्म्याद्यष्टशक्तयः।

[2] आधारनवकं मुद्राशक्तयः।

[3] पृथिव्यप्तेजोवाय्वाकाश श्रोत्रत्वक्चक्षुर्जिह्वाघ्राणवाक्पाणिपादपायूपस्थानि मनोविकारः कामाकर्षिण्यादि षोडशशक्तयः।

[4] वचनादानगमनविसर्गानन्दहानोपादानोपेक्षाख्यबुद्धयोऽनङ्गकुसुमाद्यष्टौ।

[5] These Nadis are not the gross physical nerves known to medical science. They are "Yoga Nadis" and are subtle

Gandhari, Pusha, Sankhini, Sarasvati, Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna are the fourteen Powers, Sarva Sankshobhini etc. in the Chaturdasa kona.[1]

The five breaths, *prāna* the main breath, *apāna* the lower breath, *vyāna* the breath pervasive, *udāna* the upper breath, *samāna* the medial breath together with the five auxiliary breaths *nāga*, *kurma*, *kṛkara*, *devadatta*, and *dhananjaya*[2] are the deities Sarvasiddhiprada etc. in the outer Dasara Chakra.[3]

These ten breaths acting on the digestive fire of the stomach *jāṭharāgni* become tenfold and digest food of all kinds. These are the deities in the inner Dasara Chakra.[4]

Cold, heat, pleasure, pain, wish, sattva, rajas and tamas are the eight deities Vasini etc. in the Ashtha Kona.[5]

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channels (*vivara*) along which the Pranic currents flow. The term Nadi comes from the root *nad* which means motion—Sir John Woodroffe: *Sakti and Sakta*.

[1] अलंबुसाकुहूर्विश्वोदरावारुणीहस्तिजिह्वायशोवतीपयस्विनीगान्धारीपूषा-शङ्खिनीसरस्वती इडापिङ्गलासुषुम्ना चेति चतुर्दश नाड्यः सर्वसंक्षो-भिण्यादि चतुर्दश शक्तयः।

[2] They produce respectively hiccup, closing and opening eyes, assistance to digestion, yawning and distension.

[3] प्राणापानव्यानोदानसमाननागकूर्मकृकरदेवदत्तधनञ्जया दशवायवः सर्वसिद्धिप्रदादि बहिर्दशारदेवताः।

[4] . . .ते मनुष्याणां देहगाः भक्ष्यभोज्यचोष्यलेह्यपेयात्मकपञ्चविधमन्नं पाचयन्ति। एता दशवह्निकलाः सर्वज्ञाद्या अन्तर्दशारगा देवताः।

[5] शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेच्छाः सत्त्वरजस्तमो वशिन्यादिशक्त्यष्टौ।

The *tanmātras*, sound, touch, form, taste and smell are the five flower-arrows; mind is the sugar-cane bow, love is the noose, hatred the goad.[1]

avyakta the unmanifest, *mahat* the vast cosmic principle of Force and *ahankāra* the divisional principle of Ego-formation are the three deities in the primary triangle, Kameswari, Vajreswari and Bhagamalini.[2]

The pure absolute consciousness is Kameshwara.[3] One's own soul full of Existence-Bliss is the Supreme deity Lalita.[4]

Thus the identity is established part by part, limb by limb between the human body and Sri Chakra. It will be seen that the meditation proceeds from the outermost to the innermost being, the very soul of the Sadhaka. At the outset, all beings have a natural state *svabhāva*, *niyati*. The creation is nothing but an outflow of the Delight of the Divine, the *rasa* and the existence on earth is permeated by this sap of life which takes a nine-fold form as *sṛngāra* etc. Man cherishes these nine *rasas* as the essence of existence and pays tribute to them by giving expression in the form of art, poetry and literature. These fine sentiments soon

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[1] शब्दादितन्मात्राः पञ्च पुष्पबाणाः। मनः इक्षुधनुः। रागः पाशः द्वेषोऽङ्कुशः।

[2] अव्यक्तमहदहंकाराः कामेश्वरीवज्रेश्वरीभगमालिन्यः अन्तस्त्रिकोणगा देवताः।

[3] निरूपाधिकसंविदेव कामेश्वरः।

[4] सदानन्दपूर्णः स्वात्मैव परदेवता ललिता।

become distorted and take shape as *kāma*, *krodha*, lust, anger etc. with the attendant *puṇya* and *pāpa*. These have their impact on the human complex which operates through nine centres. These centres are the focii to which the cosmic forces are directed, sources of energy and power, potential and latent which will manifest under suitable conditions to correspond to the play of the universal forces in the respective centres of the Cosmos. So, the meditation takes up first one's own *niyati* and the nine rasas, then their distorted forms of *kāma*, *krodha* and then deals with the centres of activity.

Now the physical sheath is taken up which is composed of the *panca bhūtas*, five elements and their manifestation in the body as the five organs of knowledge and the five organs of action. Then the faculties which do not originate in the physical limbs *ananga* though operating through them are dealt with. Then comes the *prāṇa śarira*, the vital sheath. The fourteen Nadis, the ten breaths and their tenfold action on the upkeep and maintenance of the system are dealt with. Further on, the *manomaya*, the mental person as the leader of the vital body, *prāṇa śarira netā*, is taken up with the attendant cold, heat, pleasure and pain, three gunas etc. Then we come to the realm of the illumined mind acting through the *tanmātras* of sound, touch etc. This is the summit of the triple universe, the *svar* of the Vedas where Indra, the Sovereign, holds sway over the triple worlds Prithvi, Antariksha and Dyauh, the corresponding Anna, Prana and Manas of the *pinḍāṇḍa*. Whatever

man has to receive from High Above, it is transmitted through his mind. Be it noted that the mind of man is equated with the sugar-cane bow in the hand of the Divine Mother. If one allows the mind to be a docile instrument of the Divine, if one consents it to be wielded by the higher forces, with the help of the mind itself one is able to grasp all things beyond the mind. Such a mind along with the other instruments in the hands of the Divine Mother, the noose and the goad, love and its negative aspect, hate, can act as a bridge between the higher and lower realms, between God and man and bring down the plenitude of the higher realms in the lower triple realms of mind, life and body[1]. Going beyond the realm of

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[1] *Vide* Sri Aurobindo in his magnificent epic poem *savitri:*

"Mind is a mediator divinity;
Its powers can undo all Nature's work:
Mind can suspend or change earth's concrete law.
Affranchised from earth-habit's drowsy seal
The leaden grip of Matter it can break;
Indifferent to the angry stare of Death;
It can immortalise a moment's work;
A simple fiat of its thinking force,
The casual pressure of its slight assent
Can liberate the Energy dumb and pent
Within its chambers of mysterious trance:
It makes the body's sleep a puissant arm,
Holds still the breath, the beatings of the heart,
While the unseen is found, the impossible done,
Communicates without means the unspoken thought;
It moves events by its bare silent will,
Acts at a distance without hands or feet.
This giant Ignorance, this dwarfish Life

the Mind, one experiences the triad, the divisional principle in the form of Ego, the vast all-pervading Force and the Unmanifest behind all appearances. Then everything is sensed as absolute pure consciousness and along with it the state of Existence–Bliss is experienced. This is the culmination of meditation as this Tantric discipline is not intended to withdraw the aspirant into a *laya* but make him participate in the world of names and forms as one in identity with Shiva and Shakti. Both *bhukti*, enjoyment and *mukti*, liberation, are the aims of the Sadhana.

It can illumine with a prophet sight,
Invoke the bacchic rapture, the Fury's goad,
In our body arouse the demon or the god,
Call in the Omniscient and Omnipotent,
Awake a forgotten Almightiness within,
In its own plane a shining emperor,
Even in this rigid realm, Mind can be king." (1.5)

XIII. SRI CHAKRA—FORMULATIONS

"*Whatever way a person is profited by performing hundred sacrifices, in the same way he is profited by a devout perception of Sri Chakra.*"[1] —Nityotsava

We have so far dealt with the *panca tādātmya*, the fivefold oneness, the oneness of the Chakra, the Deity, the Mantra, the Guru and the Sadhaka—the pivot on which the whole worship hinges. We now proceed to deal with the various formulations of Sri Chakra for external worship.

If the worship is of a temporary nature, the Chakra is drawn afresh each time. The ancient texts give very elaborate instructions on how to draw the Sri Chakra, which may not interest a modern reader. But it is necessary to know that there are two distinct ways of drawing the Sri Chakra, one according to *kaula* tradition and the other according to the *samaya* tradition.

The *kaula* way is *samhāra krama*, wherein one draws first the circle, then drawing nine chords to serve as the bases of the nine triangles, inscribes four triangles drawn with apex up and five with apex down, forming the figure *nava yonyātmaka*.

The *samaya* method which is *sṛṣṭi krama* is to draw the primary triangle first, place the Bindu inside and then extend the sides of the triangles

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[1] सम्यक् शतक्रतून् कृत्वा यत्फलं समवाप्नुयात् ।
तत्फलं लभते कृत्वा भक्त्या श्रीचक्रदर्शनम् ।।

to form the eight corners and then extend to form the ten cornered figure and so on.

In both the methods, the procedure for drawing the outer eight petals, then the sixteen petals, the three girdles and the three lines forming the outermost square with four porticos, are the same.

The point of intersection of two lines is technically known as *sandhi* while the point of intersection of three lines is called *marma.*[1] The outer peripheries, four in number, which are drawn in the same way in both the Kaula and the Samaya methods are also known as *marmas.* So in the Sri Chakra, we have twenty-four *sandhis*, twenty eight *marmas*[2] and fortythree corners. One important point to remember is that when drawing the petals, no space should be left between one petal and another. The *bhūtabhairava tantra* warns that if one conceives filaments *kesara* in this Chakra, the Bhairavas along with their Yoginis bring harm to him.[3] Bhaskararaya in his *setubandha* quoting this explains *kesara* as the interspace between two petals—*dala-dvaya-madhya-avakāśa.*

The material used for drawing the Chakra is important. The colour of the material or its nature varies according to the intentions of the aspirant

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[1] द्विरेखासङ्गमस्थानं सन्धिरित्यभिधीयते ।
त्रिरेखासङ्गमस्थानं मर्म मर्मविदो विदुः ।।

[2] अष्टाविंशतिमर्माणि चतुर्विंशति सन्धयः ।

[3] योऽस्मिन् यन्त्रे महेशानि केसराणि प्रकल्पयेत् ।
योगिनीसहितास्तस्य हिंसां कुर्वन्ति भैरवाः ।।

in performing the worship. Sri Chakra is most auspicious and worshipped to get all the auspicious things in life, finally culminating in the attainment of the highest purpose of life *parama puruṣārtha*. For all these purposes red is preferred as the colour of the material, as the Goddess is experienced as all red in inner contemplation. The material that is usually used for drawing is saffron mixed with cow's milk.

But the worship is prescribed for the *ṣaṭ-karmas*, six acts, as well, viz., appeasement, attraction, stoppage, enmity, removal and death.[1] For instance, for stopping all arguments of the opponents, for paralysing their speech, the *jnānārṇava tantra* prescribes the drawing of Sri Chakra with yellow materials and its worship with yellow flowers.[2] For creating enmity, breaking amity which is despicable indeed, the materials used are also despicable. For this purpose, the *nityā ṣoḍaśikārṇava* states that the Sri Chakra should be drawn with the dung of buffalo and horse mixed with cow's urine.[3]

For permanent worship, the Chakra is drawn on durable base. Bhurja leaf, copper, silver and gold are the bases used. The Chakra is drawn and life is installed into it by appropriate means. The efficacy of such *prāṇa pratiṣṭhā* is said to last

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1 *śānti, vaśya, stambhana, vidveṣaṇa, uccāṭana* and *māraṇa*.

2 पीतद्रव्यैः समालिख्य पीतपुष्पैः समर्चयेत् ।
पूर्वाशाभिमुखो भूत्वा स्तम्भयेत् सर्ववादिनः ।।

3 महिषाश्वपुरीषाभ्यां गोमूत्रेणाङ्कितं लिखेत् ।

in the case of gold for life, in the case of silver for thirty two years, in copper for twelve years and in the Bhurja leaf for six years. The efficacy can be re-established by proper means. In fact the efficacy of a Yantra is initially due to the power surcharged by the process of installation and later dependent on proper maintenance which is effected by daily worship done with sincerity of belief and intensity of devotion. If the yantra becomes maimed or broken, if the lines in it are not properly drawn or have faded, if it becomes burnt by fire etc. the Yantra is not a fit object for worship and should be consigned to the holy waters *tirthodake nikṣipet.*

Sri Chakra for permanent worship can be engraved or embossed; in this connection, the Tantra mentions three lay-outs, *prastāras*. When the Chākra is identified with the *vaśini vāgdevatās*, it is known as *bhu prastāra*, with the *mātṛkās* as *kailāsa prastāra* and with the sixteen *nityās* as *meru prastāra.*

Once the Chakra is laid out properly and life instilled into it, its influence is felt around. It is like fire burning, irrespective of whether the people know its burning properties or not. In this way Sri Chakra is used as a *kavaca*, an armour, an amulet to be worn for protection. If Sri Chakra is prepared by writing around it all the letters of the alphabet *mātrkās* and then worn on the shoulder, the wearer is protected from being killed by all beings.[1]

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[1] अथवा मातृकां सर्वां लिखित्वा चक्रबाह्यतः।
धारयेद्बाहुमूले यः सोऽवध्यः सर्वजन्तुषु ।। (2.32)

It remains for us now to mention about the forms in which Sri Chakra is worshipped. One form is that in which all the nine chakras of Sri Chakra are on one and the same plane. This is the popular Sri Chakra in the form of lines, either engraved or embossed. The other form which is known as *meru* is where one finds that nine chakras are on different elevations, not on the same plane. This too is of three kinds. If we begin from *bhūpura*, we have said that the outermost three chakras are known as *sṛṣṭi* Chakra, the next three as *sthiti* Chakra and the remaining inner three as *samhāra* Chakra. The first kind of Meru is with the *sṛṣṭi* Chakra on one plane, the *sthiti* Chakra on a higher plane and the *samhāra* Chakra on a still higher plane. The second kind is the two lotuses of sixteen and eight petals are on a higher plane than the Bhupura and all the other Chakras on a higher plane than the two lotuses. The third kind is where all the Chakras are on different planes, each higher than the preceding one, the elevation rising from *bhupura* to *bindu*. It is said that these elevations are the representations of Mount Meru, the axis of the earth and hence the name Meru to this particular form of Sri Chakra.

XIV. OUTER WORSHIP

"*As one mounts peak after peak, there becomes clear the much that has still to be done.*"[1] —Rig Veda

"*When this great goddess supreme evolves in the form of the chakra, the evolutions of the limbs in her body are all the Avarana deities.*"[2] —Kamakala Vilasa

"*The goddess Lalita, she alone knows the gains that come out of the worship of her chakra.*"[3]

—Brahmanda Purana

"The Tantra deems it essential to inculcate the doctrine that no worship of the Deity is complete without the worship of the Deity's body in a material image—an idol or a picture or some symbol in the physical world."[4] Inner worship leads one on the path of Yoga and knowledge; but for full development, for a mastery over material nature outer worship is necessary. It is powerful and effective, intensifies devotion and goes a long way to stabilise the inner realisation in outer conditions. It is the fashion in certain quarters to decry outer worship as a crutch, as a method meant for novices. But it is better to walk on crutches than not to walk at all. No

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[1] यः सानोः सानुमारुहत् भूर्यस्पष्ट कर्त्वम्। RV.I. 10.2

[2] सेयं परा महेशी चक्राकारेण परिणमेत यदा।
तद्देहावयवानां परिणतिरावरणदेवताः सर्वाः॥ (36)

[3] सा वेत्ति ललिता देवी स्वचक्रार्चनजं फलम्॥

[4] Sri Kapali Sastriar: Sidelights on the Tantra. (collected works of T. V. Kapali Sastry Vol. One: The Book of Lights I)

doubt if the outer worship is done as a lifeless ritual, it is only waste of time. As Sri Aurobindo says "if *bāhya pūjā* (external worship) is purely external then of course it is the lowest form. But if done with the true consciousness it can bring the greatest possible completeness to the adoration by allowing the body and the most external consciousness share in the spirit and act of worship."

Worship is done to the goddess in the Sri Chakra as it is the form-pattern of the goddess, the spot in which all the rays of the Great Radiance are focussed. There develops an intimate relationship between the worshipper and Sri Chakra, as the worship proceeds and the worshipper begins to feel this emblem of the great goddess as a part of himself.[1] He looks to the Chakra for everything and always gets the needed

[1] The author is able to quote from personal experience the following:

The author's grandfather was a great Vedantin. But he found no contradiction in assiduously worshipping the Devi in the form of Meru, to which he devoted daily considerable time. The Meru was made of five metals, *panca loha* and like any metal, used to get tarnished. Apart from the daily *abhiṣeka*, ceremonial bath with water, a special cleaning was undertaken at fixed intervals to restore the Meru back to its original brightness. At times it happened that the special cleaning had to be postponed. On such occasions invariably the Vedantin fell ill with some sickness or the other. Always he understood the reason for his illness, immediately cleaned the Meru restoring it to its original shining. No sooner he did this, than his illness disappeared and he became well again.

response, guiding him through the labyrinths of the Sadhana.

There is a special form of worship prescribed in the case of Sri Chakra which is known as *navāvaraṇa pūjā*. This is a systemaic worship of the deities situated in the nine chakras of Sri Chakra. When the great Goddess transmits herself in the universes she has created, this transmission takes two forms—a stepping up *padavikṣepa* and a gradual rise—*kramodaya*. The former kind of transmission is evident in the creation of gods and goddesses who are the various steps in the course of evolution and occupy graded positions in the heirarchy of the universal scheme. These are typal beings cast in different types to suit the various levels of the Cosmos, but not taking part in a gradual evolution. While the latter kind of transmission, a gradual rise, is found in the rest of the beings that are created and who actively take part in evolution. The beings who have to gradually evolve take the assistance of typal beings in various stages of evolution and progress forward. As the *bhairava yāmalā* says, the Divine Mother conjoined with Kameshwara is stationed in the Bindu in the form of great effulgence and from her body emanate thousands, lakhs, crores and myriads of rays which are the various gods and goddesses who pervade the whole universe.

If we take a look at Sri Chakra, we find that the Bindu is the centre of the Chakra surrounded by the eight chakras. One has to pass through a host of *parivāra devatās* to get at a glimpse of the *pradhāna devatā* in the Bindu. The nine chakras

can be called as nine sheaths, *kośas*, covering the Supreme Truth, nine planes through which one has to traverse to reach the summit, nine steps in the staircase of existence. Whatever is the figure used, it is evident that it is not easy to reach the Supreme Goddess Lalita; the journey is arduous, has to be undertaken in various stages and cannot be effected at a stretch. The *bindusthāna* is well guarded by the ramparts of chakras[1] and is well concealed from the eyes of the uninitiate. If we consider Sri Chakra in the form of Meru, as a series of graded elevations from Bhupura to Bindu, each chakra is a stage in the ascent of the being, a plateau amidst the rising slopes of the mountain Meru. To reach the summit is an uphill task and one has to rest at the various chakras before one can proceed ahead. As one climbs from chakra to chakra, greater and greater vistas are opened out before one. Finally when one nears the summit, thinking everything is lost, all is gained with the grand vision of the Supreme Goddess in the Bindu. This the Tantra describes as *nidhane dhanam*, wealth at the point of termination.

It should be noted that these steps, *padāni*, stations *dhāmāni*, or plateaus are there in one's own being and there is a close correspondence between the levels in one's own being and the

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[1] The temples are constructed on this principle. There are so many *prākāras*, enclosures, one has to traverse before one can come to the sanctum sanctorum *garbha gṛha* the house of the womb (*bindusthāna*) where he principal deity is enshrined.

levels in Sri Chakra. In fact, this is the rationale underlying the worship of the Nava Avaranas. *āvaraṇa* means an enclosure or a veil. The nine chakras from Trailokya Mohana to the Sarvanandamaya chakra are the nine *āvaraṇas*. There are nine enclosures to be traversed, nine veils to be lifted before one could come face to face with the Truth. This *āvaraṇa*, veil, is not Maya, an illusion. It is real in its own way and is true at that stage of the ascent of the being. The knowledge is concealed in these folds. It has to unfold itself, reveal itself. In the process the veil is not rent asunder; it is just lifted up. The Seer of the Veda prays to Varuna to slacken the triple noose that is above, below and in the middle, so that fixed in Varuna's law he may be without blemish for Aditi, the infinite Mother.[1] He does not pray for the cutting asunder of the noose; he only asks for the slackening of the knot appropriate to the three places—high above, below and middle, *ut slathaya*, *ava slathaya* and *vi slathaya*. To get at the whole Truth, the Vedic Seers and the Tantric adepts affirm that it is not necessary to destroy the partial truths. There is no point in gaining God by losing the world. If the *āvaraṇas* have to be destroyed, there will not be any *pūjā*, worship prescribed for these nine *āvaraṇas*. The whole Truth has to be realised and in the perspective of such realisation, the partial truths have to be perceived. The One

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[1] उदुत्तमं वरुण पाशमस्मदवाधमं वि मध्यमं श्रथाय।
अथा वयमादित्य व्रते तवानागसो अदितये स्याम॥
—R.V. (I-24-15)

great Goddess in the Bindu does not negate the many goddesses in the chakras.

In the *nava āvaraṇa pūjā*, worship is done to the Sri Chakra, chakra by chakra. The worship proceeds from the outer to the inner, from the Bhupura to the Bindu, from the Trailokya Mohana to the Sarvanandamaya chakra. In the chapter on the Deities, we have dealt with the presiding deity of each chakra, its Yoginis and its Mudra devatas. For example, in the fifth *āvaraṇa pūjā*, worship is done in the outer ten-edged figure known as Sarvarthasadhaka chakra to the Kulottirna Yoginis like Sarvashiddhiprada, Sarvasampatprada etc. and the Sarvonmadini Mudra appropriate to this chakra is shown. The worshipper prays that these Kulottirna Yoginis, well-pleased and well worshipped, may remain posited in the Sarvarthasadhaka chakra with their mudras, siddhis, weapons, saktis, vehicles and retinues.[1] Then there is an appropriate Mantra consisting of seed-letters for each presiding deity of the chakra which should be mentioned. In the fifth *āvaraṇa*, the Mantra will be *hsaim hsklim hssauh* and the presiding deity Tripurasri. Each *āvaraṇa pūjā* is dedicated with devotion to the great Goddess who treats with motherly love those who take refuge in her and the fulfilment of one's wish is prayed for.[2]

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[1] एताः कुलोत्तीर्णयोगिन्यः सर्वार्थसाधके चक्रे समुद्राः ससिद्धयः सायुधाः सशक्तयः सवाहनाः सपरिवाराः सर्वोपचारैः सम्पूजिताः सन्तर्पिताः सन्तु ।

[2] अभीष्टसिद्धिं मे देहि शरणागतवत्सले ।
भक्त्या समर्पये तुभ्यममुकावरणार्चनम् ।।

The worship done to each *āvaraṇa* has an effect on the corresponding level in the being of the aspirant and a *pūjā* truly done always lifts the aspirant towards the higher altitudes of his being, ultimately towards the supreme Consciousness–Bliss concentrated as a point in the Bindu. It is common experience that the *pūjā* uplifts the spectators as well and each experiences an elevation and an elation according to his receptivity.

We would not have dealt adequately with the topic of Navavarana puja if we fail to mention about the exquisite Navavarana kirtanas of Sri Muthuswami Dikshita, celebrated as one of the Music Trinity by the votaries of Karnatic music. This is not the place to dwell on the soul-enthralling music of Dikshita and the solid silent Peace it brings down from the high supernals; but it has to be mentioned that apart from being a musician and a composer of a very high order, Dikshita was a great Tantric and a master of mellifluous Sanskrit.

The Tantra Shastra, it has to be remembered, is very catholic in its approach. May be, it frowns on the unbeliever with its strictures, confounds the critic with its misleading nomenclature, baffles the uninitiate with its codes and conundrums, laughs at the sceptic with its down-to-the-earth approach. But to the earnest seeker, it opens the doors wide and makes the treasures accessible to him, irrespective of caste, creed or sex. The Veda is prescribed for the first three castes; but the

Tantra is for all who aspire. Normally the worship of Sri Chakra and the Navavarana Puja are for those who are initiated in the *śri vidyā mantra.* But even if they are not initiated, if some people earnestly seek the Divine Mother, there should be a way for them to approach her. For the Divine Mother is the Mother of all, of the wise as well as of the idiot, of the initiate as well as of the non-initiate, of the gods as well as of the Asuras. In her eyes all are equal and she is equally compassionate towards all. It is not necessary to know the Mantra or Yantra; a sincere devotion and an absolute surrender are all that are required. A mother does not pick holes in the loving approach made by her child. As the Tantric feelingly exclaims, if we slip on the ground, the ground is our prop; if we are at fault in dealings with the Divine Mother, she is our sole refuge."[1]

It is to the credit of Dikshita that, moved by this true Tantric impulse of catholicity, he set to music the cardinal principles of Navavarana worship in his gems of *kritis,* thus throwing open the treasures of Navavarana Puja to all those who are moved to approach the Divine Mother through devotional music. When these compositions are sung with true devotion, the melodious music makes effective the presence of the goddesses who

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[1] भूमौ स्खलितपादानां भूमिरेवावलम्बनम् ।
त्वयि जातापराधानां त्वमेव शरणं शिवे ।।

are the waves of vibrations of the infinite ocean of Consciousness-Bliss.'[1]

Apart from the Navavarana worship, there is the worship of the Devi in Sri Chakra by reciting the thousand occult names of Lalita, *lalitā sahasranāma*. It is said that the royal goddess is immediately pleased when *arcanā*, worship is done with the leaves of Bilva, lotuses or the leaves of Tulasi.[2] It is enough for the devotee to do worship of the Sri Chakra, to do japa of Sri Vidya and to recite the thousand names.[3] The Tantra ataches great importance to the worship of Sri Chakra on fullmoon nights. The *brahmāṇḍa purāṇa* says that if one worships every month on the full moon night the supreme deity in the Sri Chakra with the help of *lalitā sahasranāma*, he becomes one with the form of Lalita and Lalita becomes one with him in form. There is absolutely no difference between them and one would be committing a sin if he tries to differentiate between them.[4]

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[1] There is a unique composition of Dikshita in Madhyamavati Raga beginning with the words "*sri raja rajeswarim*". This deals with the worship of the whole Sri Chakra, enumerating the nine Chakras with their respective Mantras.

[2] बिल्वपत्रैश्चक्रराजे योऽर्चयेत् ललिताम्बिकाम् ।
पद्मैर्वा तुलसीपत्रैरेभिर्नामसहस्रकैः ।
सद्यः प्रसादं कुरुते तत्र सिंहासनेश्वरी ।।

[3] चक्रराजार्चनं देव्या जपो नाम्नां च कीर्तनम् ।
भक्तस्य कृत्यमेतावत् अन्यदभ्युदयं विदुः ।।

[4] प्रतिमासं पौर्णमास्यामेभिर्नामसहस्रकैः ।
रात्रौ यश्चक्रराजस्थामर्चयेत् परदेवताम् ।
स एव ललितारूपः तद्रूपा ललिता स्वयम् ।
न तयो विद्यते भेदो भेदकृत् पापकृत् भवेत् ।।

Through the very outer worship which can be effective only if there is a difference of the worshipper and the worshipped, the Tantra thus reaches the supreme culmination of an absolute union between the devotee and the deity.

XV. INNER WORSHIP

"*Unifying the outer fire with the fire of knowledge, one should worship.*"[1] —Jnanarnava

"*To be worshipped by those turned inwards she is very difficult of access to the extroverts.*"[2]

— Lalita Sahasranama

"*The valiant ones worship the Supreme in the heart, tender like a tendril, though their inner being strong like adamant can bear and hold the Lord.*"[3]

— Sri Kapali Sastriar

It is very difficult for the aspirant accustomed to external worship to abandon it suddenly and take to meditation. The process has to be gradual and there should be an intermediate stage to fill the gap between outer worship and meditation. The Tantra Shastra prescribes inner worship as the next step to outer worship. The inner worship teaches the aspirant to look inward and by slow degrees leads him to Dhyana or meditation. In the initial stages, in the process of inner worship, all the minute details of outer worship are gone through. They are not performed outwardly with the movement of the limbs; but the whole drama is enacted on the stage of the mind. The mind

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[1] ज्ञानाग्नि बाह्यवह्निं च ह्येकीकृत्य प्रपूजयेत् ।

[2] अन्तर्मुखसमाराध्या बहिर्मुखसुदुर्लभा ।

[3] परं पूजन्ति हृदये धीराः पल्लवकोमले ।
अपि वज्रोपमं तेषामन्तरं धर्तुमीश्वरम् ।। *āhnika stava*

imagines the outer worship that the body and its limbs have been performing all along and in rigorous sequence follows through the whole procedure in great and minute detail. This is a conscious exercise, a spiritual practice which not only develops the faculty of mental imagination but makes the mind constantly dwell on the adoration of the Deity. This form of inner worship is known as *mānasa pūjā*, mental adoration. In this, the mind is trained to dwell constantly on the Divine to the exclusion of other thoughts and activities, so much so gradually the power of concentration is developed. When the mind becomes capable of concentrating at will, it can empty itself of all thoughts and be receptive to higher forces. Then one is launched into Dhyana. It should be noted that the mind is very active in Manasa Puja while it should be quiet and receptive in Dhyana.

If in the external worship, one applies sandal paste to the deity, adorns it with flowers, waves lamps in front of it etc., all these things are imagined in the same way that they are physically done, in the act of inner worship. To aid the mind in its imagination, the conceptions of the mythological lore *purāṇas* are gainfully employed by the Tantric adepts.

In the external worship of Sri Chakra, the diagram engraved or embossed on a plate etc. properly installed is enough to inculcate fervour and a sense of adoration in the worshipper towards the Goddess. But in mental worship, a more vivid

portrayal is necessary. When we talk of Sri Chakra as the abode of the great Goddess, it is easy to imagine Sri Chakra as the central portion of a great city in which the great Goddess lives. The *lalitā upākhyāna* and other Puranas mention about such a great city calling it as *śrīpura* or *śrīnagara*. Where is this city situated? There are two places mentioned in the Puranas. One is in the middle peak of the mountain Meru. The mountain Meru is described in mythology as made of gold, *hemādri*, far beyond the mount Kailasa. There are four peaks, three peaks in the form of a triangle and the fourth peak in the centre of the triangle. In the three peaks are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, while in the middle one is the great *śrīpura* where the Divine Mother abides. These and other details are graphically described in *lalitā stavaratna*, otherwise known as *āryā dviśati* of the sage Durvasa, Krodha Bhattaraka, the irate sire, as he is called, one of the twelve promulgators of the Sri Vidya Cult. This work of Durvasa is held in high esteem by the worshippers of the Devi and is a powerful aid to *mānasa pūjā* as the various ramparts, gardens, lakes, avenues etc, in the Sripura are so graphically and picturesquely described.

Then there is the other one mentioned in *rudra yāmala*. Far outside the crores and crores of universes that have been created, high above, in the midst of a nectar ocean, *sudhā sindhu*, there is a great island made of all jewels, *ratnadvīpa*. In that island is the *śrīpura* full of lotus groves, Kadamba trees etc. where in the mansion made of

the jewel *cintāmaṇi* is the Goddess united with her Lord, seated on a cot, the legs of which are Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Isana and the plank of which is Sadasiva.

The modern reader may dismiss all this as wild imagination and may say that the employment of these concepts in inner worship will only lead to the depravity of mind. But seeing the consistency in description and the uniformity in phraseology employed in the various Puranas, one cannot escape the conclusion that these are the recorded impressions, faint though they may be, in the memory of a race, created by a powerful impact of vivid spiritual experiences. And the real Tantric is quick to see through the veil. All the mystics have always talked about a city of the Divine, the indomitable city of the gods, *devānām pūr ayodhyā*, the city surrounded by the immortal nectar, *amṛtena āvṛtām purīm*, the great place on the back of Heaven, *nākasya pṛṣthe*, the unvanquished city, *aparājitā*. The *sudhā samudra* is the ocean of immortality, of eternal bliss and the *ratna dvīpa* is the site of supreme effulgence. Thus these portrayals are symbolic and the Tantric in the inner worship proceeds to unravel the truth represented by these symbols.

For the Tantric is not contented with a mere mental imagination. His *modus operandi* is always to begin from the gross, proceed to the subtle, from there to the causal and then to the causal of all causals, *mahākāraṇa*. So, in the inner worship

when one imagines the application of sandal paste on the Deity, one does not stop there. One proceeds to find that it is done in the spirit of identification with the earth element, *pṛthivyātmanā gandham samarpayāmi*. When *śri nagara* is described as a city of twentyfive ramparts of gold, silver, iron etc. we are at the same time reminded that these ramparts represent the twentyfive essential principles, *tattvas*. The *bhāvanopaniṣad* tells explicitly that the *ratnadvīpa*, the island of nine jewels, is nothing but the body of nine *dhātus*, skin, blood fat etc.[1] The *sankalpas*, resolutions of the mind, are the Kalpaka trees and the illumined mind is the Kalpaka grove.[2] The tastes like sweetness etc. experienced by the tongue are the six seasons in the groves.[3]

Thus, in the process of inner worship one comes to realise that the *śrīpura* or *śri cakra* is not somewhere outside but inside oneself. Then the next natural step is to identify the Sri Chakra with the subtle centres in the body and do the worship mentally there. This is exactly what the followers of *samayācāra* do. The votaries of *samaya mārga* do not perform any external worship, or spend their time in collecting materials for such worship. They do not devote themselves to Homa or to *puraścaraṇa*. Of course, they hold the Sri Chakra as the abode of the goddess, but install it not in the form of a plate etc. outside. Their method is to install the

[1] देहो नवरत्नद्वीपः ।

[2] सङ्कल्पाः कल्पतरवः तेजः कल्पकोद्यानम् ।

[3] रसनया भाव्यमाना मधुराम्लतिक्तकटुकषायलवणरसाः षड्तवः ।

Sri Chakra in the *ādhāra cakras* or basic centres in their subtle bodies and conduct the worship of the goddess there. This inner worship is an advancement on the mental worship of *sripura*, as here the mental activity not only dwells constantly on an object but also around a centre of consciousness in the subtle body. All these centres are situated in the subtle body though they are felt as attached to the spinal cord. These "are conscious centres and sources of all the dynamic powers of our being organising their action through the plexuses and arranged in an ascending series from the lowest physical to the highest mind centre and spiritual centre called the thousand-petalled lotus where ascending Nature, the Serpent-power of the Tantrics, meets the Brahman and is liberated into the Divine Being. The centres are closed or half-closed within us and have to be opened before their full potentiality can be manifested in our physical nature; but once they are opened and completely active, no limit can easily be set to the development of their potencies and the total transformation to be possible."[1] The Shakti lying coiled or asleep in the lowest centre Muladhara, the Kundalini Shakti, when awakened through Yoga, uncoils herself and begins to rise upward like a fiery serpent, passing through the centres Swadhishthana, Manipuraka, Anahata, Visuddhi and Ajna until the Shakti meets Shiva in the Sahasradala Padma in an ecstatic union.

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[1] Sri Aurobindo.

In the inner worship, amongst the votaries of *samaya mārga* themselves there are various grades. All of them, however, start from the centre Manipuraka which is the centre of larger life-forces. Muladhara and Swadhishthana are left out as they represent the gross physical consciousness and the activities of the lower vital, the small movements of lust, greed etc. The Tantra describes the results of inner worship by identifying the Sri Chakra and the goddess with the various centres. Various *muktis*, releases are effected. In the inner worship, in the centre Manipuraka one gets release in the form of *sārṣṭi* that is, one feels that one has the same status and abides in a city similar to Sripura, daily going and serving the goddess in Sripura or Sri Chakra. Worship in Anahata or heart-centre results in *sālokya mukti*, makes one feel that he is residing in the same place of the Divine Mother. In Visuddhi one gets *sāmipya mukti* close proximity to the goddess. In Ajna, *sārupya mukti* is assured. The aspirant has a form similar to that of the goddess. In the thousand-petalled lotus, *sāyujya* mukti, an undivided union with the goddess, complete in all respects, is obtained.

The heart-centre, Anahata and the head-centre Sahasrara are considered to be very important and the inner worship conducted in these centres is said to be very effective and far-reaching in results. Sri Chakra is called *viyat cakra* because it is contemplated in the *viyat*, *ākāśa*, the space of the heart-centre. The *samayacāra* advocates that

the aspirant should station himself in the heart-centre, contemplate on the Sri Chakra situated there and conduct the inner worship. As the sadhana progresses, the aspirant refers everything to his heart-centre and is led and guided at every step by the Deity ever present in the heart. However the followers of *samaya mārga* hold that the culmination is obtained only by an inner worship in the thousand-petalled lotus. Here the goddess herself is called *samayā* who attains equality, *samam yāti* union with the Lord who again is *samaya* attaining equality with her in union. Shiva and Shakti, here are inseparably united, equal in respect of place, condition, action, form and name, *sāmya* in *adhiṣṭhāna*, *avasthāna*, *anuṣṭhāna*, *rūpa* and *nāma*. When it is said that Sri Chakra is in the middle of Sripura on the peak of the mountain Meru or amidst the great lotus forest *mahā padmavana* in the ocean of nectar, *sudhā sindhu*, the Tantric has no difficulty in seeing through the symbols and locating the Sri Chakra in the head-centre. The Sahasrara is the Sri Chakra, for it is on the top of the spinal cord, on the summit of *meru daṇḍa*. It is the famous lotus grove *mahā padmavana* "a million lotuses swaying on one stem", as the seer-poet of *sāvitri* says.[1] It is the *sudhā sindhu*, the ocean of nectar wherefrom the sap of all existence, the *rasa* of the union of Shiva and Shakti overflows. The fire in the Muladhara energises the latent coiled Powers which spread out and manifest and overflow when the delightful union of Shiva and Shakti

[1] Sri Aurobindo : *sāvitri* (2.12),

takes place in the moon-chambers of the thousand-fold house. The illumined mind is in Sahasrara, the seat of the mystic moon,[1] the purifying Soma, *pavamāna soma*, the sweet honey, *madhu* or the bee *saragha*, the sap *rasa*, the bliss, *ananda*. Stressing the correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm, the Tantric acclaims the external moon as the visible symbol of the Divine Mother, as the very form of Sri Chakra. For, to the Tantric, as to the Vedic seer of old, moon or Soma represents the Delight of existence, the sap of life, the basic Bliss in everything. It is this which gives life to Life and this Bliss is the Divine Mother herself. The Tantric says that the eternal *vimarśa śakti* became fivefold in response to the fourfold aspiration of the creation. These are the five Shakti triangles superimposed on four Shiva triangles to form the Sri Chakra. This fivefold division took the form of the five *bhutas* elements—ether, air, fire, water and earth. Ether's quality is sound *śabda*, while air has the quality of touch, *sparśa* as well as the *śabda* quality implied. Fire has the quality of form, *rūpa*, besides *śabda* and *sparśa*; water, the quality of relish, *rasa*, besides *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*; and earth, the quality of smell, *gandha* along with the other four qualities. Thus the first element has one quality, the second two, the third three, the fourth four and the fifth five qualities, making a total of fifteen. These fifteen divisions became the time factor and are known as the days or

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[1] चन्द्रमा मनसो जातः ।

tithis.[1] These go to mark the waxing or waning of the moon and so are the digits of the moon, *candra kalā*. Thus the Divine Mother when she becomes the deliberation of the Lord, *vimarśa śakti* translates herself in Time as the moon and her fifteen digits. She is the moon in her fullness while the digits are her aspects, called *tithi nityās*. The Sanskrit word Nitya means both eternal as well as *diem*. The *nityā devatās* are fifteen in number situated five each on the sides of the primary triangle. They are Kameshwari, Bhagamalini, Nityaklinna, Bherunda, Vahnivasini, Mahavajreswari, Dooti, Tvarita, Kulasundari, Nitya, Nilapataka, Vijaya, Sarvamangala, Jwalamalinika and Chitra. The Goddess is Mahanitya, Mahatripurasundari posited in the Bindu inside the triangle. These fifteen Nityas form the fifteen-lettered *pancadaśi mantra* which is the sound-body of the Divine Mother who is the sixteenth *ṣodaśi*. That is why Sri Vidya is known as *candra kalā vidyā*.

As the moon with her fifteen digits represents the Divine Mother, external worship, as we saw in the last chapter is prescribed with the Deity contemplated in the moon *candrabimbe*

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[1] एक एव प्रकाशाख्य: पर: कोऽपि महेश्वर: ।
तस्य शक्तिर्विमर्शाख्या सा निन्या गीयते बुधै: ।
विमर्शाख्या तु नित्या सा पाञ्चविध्यं समागता ।
आकाशानिलसप्तार्चि: सलिलावनि भेदत: ।
एकैकगुणवृद्धया तु तिथिसंख्यात्वमागता ।।

dhyātvā śri lalitāmbikām as object of worship, while in the inner worship, the worship in the thousand-petalled lotus is said to be the highest form.

Now, we shall deal with Dhyana to which the inner worship ultimately leads.

XVI. MEDITATIONS

"*Deliberation on oneself is the supreme purpose of life.*"[1] —Kalpasutra

"*The Goddess Lalita whose body is the universe is verily one's own self.*"[2] —Tantra Raja

"*The fashioning of parts like face, gestures etc. is not meditation. A grand state of harmonious union effected by the entry of Shakti is meditation.*"[3]

—Nityashodasikarnava

The outer worship prepares the aspirant for inner worship which ultimately leads to Dhyana or meditation. In the outer worship, the body and the mind are fully active while in the inner worship the body is quiescent and the mind fully active. In Dhyana the mind also becomes quiescent ready to receive the riches from regions high above the mind. Upto a certain stage mind is a great helper. Its activity helps towards an one-pointed concentration. Afterwards this very activity becomes a hindrance, a bar. One is not able to proceed further. All true inspirations are received and all revelations are perceived only when the mind falls quiet.

The *jnānārṇava* Tantra outlines a meditation to make the mind quiet. The aspirant meditates

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[1] स्वविमर्शः पुरुषार्थः । —(1.6)

[2] स्वात्मैव देवता प्रोक्ता ललिता विश्वविग्रहा ।

[3] न ध्यानं मुखमुद्रादिकलानां परिकल्पनम् ।
ध्यानं शक्तिसमावेशात् सुमहत् सामरस्यकम् ।। —(5·38)

on the goddess as a thread of light, thin as a fibre in the lotus stalk, *bisatantutaniyasi*, this thread extending from one's Muladhara to the top of one's head, Brahmarandhra. This light has to be meditated upon as the play of light of the rising sun, as a flash coming out of myriads of lightnings, as an outpouring of rays of myriads of moons, filling the whole of the triple worlds with its effulgence and in the process creating, maintaining and dissolving the entire universe.[1]

The Tantra prescribes various meditations on the Sri Chakra. The aspirant meditates on Sri Chakra and thinks that inside the Sri Chakra is a blazing globe of the earth with all its hills and dales, forests and oceans. If this meditation is assiduously practised for six months, the Tantra assures that the aspirant becomes another Manmatha alluring all beings, attracting the entire world by his mere gaze.[2] At another place, the Tantra says that when an aspirant meditates on Sri Chakra, there is a stir, a commotion all around,

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[1] मूलादिब्रह्मरन्ध्रान्तं बिसतन्तुतनीयसीम् ।
उद्यत्सूर्यप्रभाजालविद्युत्कोटिप्रभामयीम् ।
चन्द्रकोटिप्रभाद्रावां त्रैलोक्यस्य प्रभामयीम् ।
अशेषजगदुत्पत्तिस्थितिसंहारकारिणीम् ।
ध्यायेन्मनो यथा देवीं निश्चलो जायते तथा ।। —(16.2-5)

[2] एतन्मन्ध्यगतां पृथ्वीं सशैलवनकाननाम् ।
चतुः समुद्रपर्यन्तां ज्वलन्तीं चिन्तयेत् प्रिये ।।
षण्मासान् ध्यानयोगेन जायते मदनोऽपरः ।
दृष्ट्वैवाऽऽकर्षयेल्लोकान् दृष्ट्वैव कुरुते वशे ।। —(2.43,44)

tatra kṣobhaḥ prajāyate. This is understandable as Sri Chakra is the symbol of the primordial stir *ādya spanda*. Then it seems women flock to the aspirant from afar like ants attracted by the smell of marrow inside the bone.[1] First the women in this world are attracted towards him. In the next stage the Naga women in the nether regions pine for his love. If the meditation proceeds on, the divine damsels are mad after him. If the Sadhaka survives all this, he becomes the repository of all power and attraction and is one with Kameshwari.

Here we have to mention a cardinal principle governing these spiritual practices. It is popularly imagined that a Devi Upasaka ends up with having powers of attraction, *ākarṣaṇa* or control *vaśya* over all persons, that he exercises an irresistible fascination over all women by his exquisite charm and so he may become a potential menace to an orderly society etc. It is true that *saundarya-lahari* describes how women with their tresses dishevelled and their robes loosened run after the worshipper of the Goddess. But nowhere in the Tantra it is mentioned that the Sadhaka, as a result of his sadhana, runs after women. In fact, he should not, whatever may be the temptation. That is the discipline. When one meditates on the Goddess of Sri Chakra, he dwells on the Primordial Divine Desire or *kāmakalā*. As he meditates on the source of all desires, all love, he becomes the centre of attraction and all the desires and love in the world

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[1] पिपीलिकास्थिन्यायेन दूरादायान्ति योषितः ।

gravitate towards him. He meditates on the self of all "selfs" and so the "selfs" of all beings yearn towards him, *sarvāṇi bhūtāni samvānchanti.* Women are the first to be affected as they are the visible manifestations of the great Goddess in this universe, *striyah samastāh sakalā jagatsu.* Perhaps the ordinary woman in the world may not understand the attraction she feels and may translate it in the accustomed language of sex. But the Sadhaka does not reciprocate in the same way. He is undaunted in the face of all attractions from the women of this world, of the nether world or of the celestial regions. If he has to proceed in the sadhana, he has to learn to love all beings, not as individual distinct beings but as so many manifestations of the great Goddess. All the beings in the world are drawn towards the Sadhaka as he is drawn towards the great Mother of love, Kameshwari. Then

> "Love that was once an animal's desire
> Then a sweet madness in the rapturous heart
> An ardent comradeship in the happy mind
> Becomes a wider spiritual yearning's space"[1]

The *bhāvanopaniṣad* outlines a series of meditations on the identification of the aspirant's body with Sri Chakra. These we have dealt with in detail in an earlier chapter. According to this Upanishad, the act of meditation itself is worship.[2] In worship one uses *arghya,* water, as a symbol of high esteem and performs *homa,* the consigning of offerings in

[1] Sri Aurobindo: *sāvitri* (10.3).

[2] भावनायाः क्रिया उपचारः ।

fire. The knowledge is *arghya*, the knowable is the *havih*, oblations, and the knower is the *hotā* sacrificer; thinking of this triad as an undifferentiated one is the worship of Sri Chakra,[1] affirms the Upanishad. According to it, Homa is the dissolution in one's self of all dividing thoughts of 'I and you' 'exists and not exists' 'to be done and not to be done'[2]

Again the great Goddess is in the form of the moon and her digits. And so the greatest meditation is to think of every day as the form in Time of the Divine Mother as the Time factor in creation has evolved as the fifteen Tithi Nityas.[3]

Now let us conclude with an important meditation on Sri Chakra as given in the Tantra. The aspirant first meditates on the lotus feet of the Guru, arrives at a sense of union with him and becomes intoxicated with the joy of intense non-duality. Then he becomes intent on watching for the *nāda* that emerges from the cavern of the heart. Then always drawn inwards he becomes indifferent to the incessant prattlings of his mind in the form of dividing thoughts. As a result he becomes exceedingly charming, all the narrowness of his being, being shattered by the play of consciousness.

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[1] ज्ञानमर्घ्यं ज्ञेयं हविः ज्ञाता होता ज्ञातृज्ञानज्ञेयानामभेदभावनं श्रीचक्रपूजनम् ।

[2] अहं त्वं अस्ति नास्ति कर्तव्यमकर्तव्यमित्यादि विकल्पानां आत्मनि विलापनं होमः ।

पञ्चदशतिथिरूपेण कालस्य परिणामावलोकनम् ।

Now in the great Light which swallows up and vomits the universe, in the face of the coiled up Serpent-power, he dissolves by mind all the rays of activities. Thus all rays that emanate are made to converge into the original Light. The great offering is the union of I-ness and this-ness churned out of the higher regions of the mind. Thus dissolving everything into the great Light, one's body becomes full of bliss and one becomes the Light itself. Then one meditates on Sri Chakra as the form-pattern emerged out of one's own Light.[1]

> "While there one can be wider than the world
> While there one is one's own infinity"[2]

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[1] संचिन्त्य परमाद्वैतभावनामदघूर्णितः ।
दहरान्तरसंसर्पन्नादालोकनतत्परः ।
विकल्परूपसंजल्पविमुखोऽन्तर्मुखः सदा ।
चित्कलोल्लासदलितसंकोचस्त्वतिसुन्दरः ।।
महाप्रकाशे विश्वस्य संहारवमनोद्यते ।

मरीचिवृत्तीर्जुहुयान्मनसा कुण्डलीमुखे ।
अहंतेदंतयोरैक्यमुन्मन्यां स्रुचि कल्पितम् ।
मथनोद्रेकसम्भूतं वस्तुरूपं महाहविः ।
हुत्वा हुत्वा स्वयं चैव सहजानन्दविग्रहः ।
स्वप्रभाप्रसराकारं श्रीचक्रं पूजयेत् सुधीः ।।
(*vityaṣodaṣikārṇava* 8:6,7&115–117)

[2] Sri Aurobindo: *sāvitri* (1.3)

APPENDIX

No.	Name of the Chakra	Description	The Mudras	The Yoginis	The Presiding Deity	The Mantra
1.	Trailokya Mohana	Square of three lines with four portals	Sarva Sankshobhini	Prakata	Tripura	अं आं सौः
2.	Sarvasa Paripuraka	Sixteen petals	Sarva Vidrawini	Gupta	Tripuresi	ऐं क्लीं सौः
3.	Sarva Sankshobhana	Eight petals	Sarvakarshini	Guptatara	Tripurasundari	ह्रीं क्लीं सौः
4.	Sarva Saubhagyadayaka	Fourteen-cornered figure	Sarvavasankari.	Sampradaya	Tripuravasini	हैं ह्क्लीं ह्सौः
5.	Sarvarthasadhaka	Ten-edged figure	Sarvonmadini	Kulottirna	Tripurasri	ह्सैं ह्स्क्लीं ह्स्सौः
6.	Sarva Rakshakara	Ten-edged figure	Sarva mahankusa	Nigarbha	Tripuramalini	ह्रीं क्लीं ब्लें
7.	Sarva Rogahara	Eight-edged figure	Khechari	Rahasya	Tripurasiddha	ह्रीं श्रीं सौः
8.	Sarva siddhi prada	Triangle	Bija	Atirahasya	Tripurambika	ह्स्रैं ह्स्क्लरीं ह्स्रौः
9.	Sarvanandamaya	Point	Yoni*	Parapara Rahasya	Mahatripura-sundari	पञ्चदशी (षोडशी वा)

* Also Trikhanda Mudra in the case of *ṣodaśi* worshippers.


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